

NOTE TO USERS

Copyrighted materials in this document have not been scanned at the request of the author. They are available for consultation in the author's university library.

346-441

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]

A

ON KAWARA'S NOMADIC MIND:
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF "A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD"

by

EUNHEE YANG

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2004

UMI Number: 3127933

Copyright 2004 by
Yang, Eunhee

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3127933

Copyright 2004 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

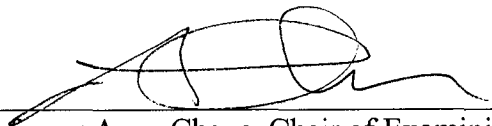
©2004

EUNHEE YANG

All Rights Reserved

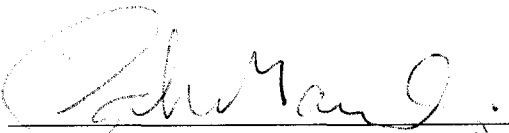
This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4. 27. 04
Date



Professor Anna Chave, Chair of Examining Committee

4-28-04
Date



Professor Patricia Mainardi, Executive Officer

Professor Romy Golan

Professor Harriet Senie

Professor Mary Anne Staniszewski

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT**ON KAWARA'S NOMADIC MIND:
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF "A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD"**

by

Eunhee Yang

Adviser: Professor Anna Chave

This study examines Kawara's autobiographical aspects of his art from 1952 to the present, from his debut in Japan to recent projects such as *Pure Consciousness* (1998). Kawara has constantly employed the subjective "I" in his art, turning his personal narratives into a system of "self-portraiture." Kawara's self-portraiture emphasizes his presence as a singular agent while critiquing cultural homogenization in both Japan and institutional designations, such as groupings of artists in New York. This dissertation investigates how his focus on the self as singular eventually lead to his intentional "international," "inter-cultural," and nomad-like living that constantly placed him between borders.

The first chapter traces Kawara's early self-portrayal as a war survivor in the wake of World War II in Japan. It contextualizes Kawara's artistic career in Japan from 1952 to 1959, when he was engaged in figurative works that reflected the war-stricken society, as exemplified by *Thinking Man* (1952), and *The Bathroom* series (1953-54). Chapter Two examines Kawara in New York in the 1960s, where he was inspired by the gradual internationalization of the art world as well as by individual, governmental, and

institutional efforts to promote contemporary Japanese art in international exhibitions. I discuss how his attention to the self eventually drove him from the center of the postwar scene to the margins. The third chapter examines the gradual progression of Kawara's self-definition as an international nomad in the highly dynamic period of the 1960s. In this period, Kawara's traveling became pivotal to his conception of authorship, beginning with his first trip to Mexico in 1959; and extending to his exposure to contemporary art in Paris during 1963 and 1964 and the inception of his *I Met* and *I Went* series in Mexico in 1968. Chapter Four analyzes Kawara's play with language and silence and his use of language as a site of identity formation and as a distancing tactic designed to show both his singularity and his refusal to be "Japanese." I trace the origin of this tactic to his early periods within and outside of Japan, specifically to *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting* (1962), as well as to his "ON-Language" projects, and his abandonment of his native tongue in favor of Esperanto and other alphabet-based languages. Chapter Five deals with how Kawara's self began to disappear from his journals and his biography as his works began to form an autobiographical system, creating a paradoxical duality of self-portrayal and self-erasure in his work.

For Seok J. Yang and Shin S. Ahn.

.

.

.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and advice of many people. The most gratitude goes to my dissertation committee. Professor Anna Chave, my advisor, encouraged and kept me in good spirit from the proposal stage to its completion. Her painstaking, detailed readings and comments over two years shaped my dissertation in a better form. Professor Romy Golan has lent her critical eyes, especially when I struggled with the proposal period. Professor Harriet Senie, one of my mentors since the master's program, helped me gain strength and control in the final stages of receiving my degree. Professor Mary Anne Staniszewski has inspired me to open my eyes to Conceptual art. Her acute understanding of contemporary art greatly improved my dissertation.

Other scholars have offered immeasurable guidance. My encounter with Dr. Reiko Tomii and her writings motivated me to further my research about contemporary Japanese art. I appreciated her valuable comments on the first two chapters. Her newly-found list-serve, Ponja-Gendai, led me to meet on-line other young and established scholars who stay in tune with what is happening now in all corners of the world. Their comments on many aspects of postwar Japanese art, however brief, broadened my perspective.

I also would like to thank many people in Japan whom I met during several research trips: Mrs. Yoshinaka Taizo and Ms. Tomisawa Rita, families of the late Mr. Yoshinaka Taizo, who used to be On Kawara's friend and colleague in the 1950s; Mr. Ikeda Tatuso, another friend and colleague of Kawara in the 1950s; Mr. Minami Yusuke, curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Mr. Yamada Satoshi, curator at the Nagoya City

Art Museum; Mr. Haito Masahiko, curator at the Aichi Prefectural Art Museum; Ms. Tsuzuki Chieko, chief curator at the Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Mr. Handa Shigeo, curator of the Chiba City Museum of Art; and Ms. Michiko Koike and Ms. Kaburaki Azusa, librarians at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.

Above all, I should thank two of my friends in Japan, Ms. Hiroshige Mikiko and Mr. Yamashiro Junichi who gladly played roles of translators and guides. Without Mikiko's help, my two research trips to Japan would have been impossible. Her hospitality and guidance made an impoverished graduate student's journey toward a Ph. D dissertation meaningful and fruitful.

I am also grateful to Mr. On Kawara and Mrs. Hiroko Kawahara (a.k.a. Hiroko Hiraoka), who have been generous in providing necessary information regarding establishing Kawara's chronology. Ms. Hanna Schouwink at David Zwirner, New York, linked me to Kawara. Three friends and translators, Kumagai Naoko, Sumi Hiroko, Hiroshige Ari, have been enormously helpful in accessing the details of Japanese literature on Kawara. There are many individuals who gladly shared their knowledge and resources whenever asked: Henning Weidemann, Yamamura Midori, Oshima Tetsuya, Ik-Joong Kang, and Kawano Hiroko.

Lastly, my family members' encouragement kept me focused throughout all these years. All of them including my mother—whose selfless way of living and thinking always overwhelms me and makes me try to become a better person—persevered after my father's death, and supported my need to focus on this dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT-----	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS-----	vii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS-----	xii
INTRODUCTION-----	1
Two Retrospectives	
Continuity and Discontinuity	
Revisionist Conceptual Art History	
Self-portrait or Autobiography	
The Kawara Myth: A Silent Man	
CH. 1. DREAM OF DEATH AND QUEST FOR IDENTITY-----	28
<i>A Thinking Man: Dream of Death and (Perhaps) Hope</i>	
Postwar Japan and Search for Identity Postwar Art and the Issue of Identity	
(Sur)Realism and Reportage Painting	
“ <i>Nippon Ten</i> ”	
Producers’ Discussion Group	
Narrative and Seriality	
Closed Rooms	
<i>Butcher’s Wife</i> or <i>Angry Woman</i>	
<i>Death Mask</i>	
“Printed Painting (<i>insatsu kaiga</i>)” after the Crisis of Painting	
Out of Japan	
CH. 2. TOKYO-NEW YORK-----	108
To New York	

From Tokyo to New York	
Tokyo in the 1960s	
International Artists and International Exhibitions: Search for Identity	
Japanese Artists in the New Art Mecca: New Identity	
Room of My Own: Kawara's Studio in New York	
CH. 3. NOMADIC MIND-----	182
<i>Leaving the Light of Greenwich Village</i>	
Mexico City	
Pictorial Diary of 1964	
Mindscapes	
1968	
From Critique of Institutionalization to Critique of Centralization	
Urban Flaneurs	
A Nomad or "A Citizen of the World"	
The "Amnesiac" Sender	
CH. 4. LANGUAGE AND BEING-----	236
Language as the Site of Subjectivity	
Art as Communication: "Printed Painting"	
<i>Conjunctive Mood</i> , 1962	
<i>ON-Language</i> , 1964	
<i>Composition of Words for a Catalogue</i> , 1965	
<i>Code</i> , 1965 and Beyond	
Language as Medium	
"Language" Series: A Reception of Language-based Art	
Kawara and Kosuth	
Kosuth and Art & Language	
Painting as Medium: Differences between Kawara and Other Conceptual Artists	
CH. 5. AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF DISAPPEARANCE-----	295

Another Dream	
Art as Path to Self-Perfection	
<i>I Am Still Alive: Death as Discontinuity and Continuity</i>	
Theme of Death and Japanese Conceptualism	
Autobiographical Mechanism	
Autobiography in Book Format	
New Autobiography	
Silence and Disappearance of the Author	

CONCLUSION-----	342
ILLUSTRATIONS-----	346
BIBLIOGRAPHY-----	442

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

1. On Kawara, *I Read*, 1966-present; a page from 1967 journal.
2. On Kawara, *I Met*, 1968-1979; a page from 1968 journal.
3. On Kawara, *I Went*, 1968-1979; a page from 1969 journal.
4. On Kawara, *I Got Up At*, 1968-1979; a postcard from 1974.
5. On Kawara, *I Am Still Alive*, a telegram from 1970.
6. On Kawara, *One Million Years-Past*, 1969-70; open view.
7. On Kawara, *One Hundred Year Calendar*, 1969; partial view.
8. On Kawara, *Today (October 5, 1992)*, 1992, liquitex on canvas; a date painting with a storage box with a piece of *New York Times*. Kawara designed this box himself.
9. On Kawara, *Pure Consciousness*, 1999; installation at the Reykjavik School of Art, Iceland.
10. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 1*, 1953, pencil on paper, 9-1/2 x 14-1/8”.
11. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 2*, 1953, pencil on paper, 9-3/4 x 14-1/2”.
12. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 3*, 1953, pencil on paper, 9-5/8 x 14-7/16”.
13. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 4*, 1953, pencil on paper, 9-7/8 x 14-7/16”.
14. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 5*, 1953, pencil on paper, 10-1/8 x 14-9/16”.
15. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 25*, 1953, pencil on paper, 9-3/4 x 14-3/16”.
16. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 26*, 1954, pencil on paper, 10-1/16 x 14-3/4”.
17. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 27*, 1954, pencil on paper, 9-7/8 x 14-5/8”.
18. On Kawara, *The Bathroom No. 28*, 1954, pencil on paper, 9-3/4 x 14-3/16”.
19. On Kawara, *Painting and Human No. 1*, 1958.
20. On Kawara, *Painting and Human No. 2*, 1959.

21. On Kawara, *The Wrath of the Colony*, 1959; with its advertisement in *Bijutsu Techo* (Spring, 1959).
22. A typewritten page from the 1966 journal supplementary to date paintings.
23. On Kawara, *Thinking Man*, 1952, oil on canvas, 39-15/16 x 26-1/16”.
24. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 1 (Part I, Anxiety)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 9-5/8 x 14-1/2”.
25. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 2 (Part I, Anxiety)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 10-3/8 x 14-15/16”.
26. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 3 (Part I, Anxiety)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 10-7/8 x 14-3/8”.
27. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 4 (Part I, Anxiety)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 21-7/8 x 30-5/16”.
28. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 5 (Part I, Anxiety)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 11-1/8 x 15-9/16”.
29. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 6 (Part I, Anxiety)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 12-3/16 x 15-1/2”.
30. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 7 (Part I, Anxiety)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 11-5/8” x 15-7/16”.
31. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 8 (Part II, Noise)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 10-1/2 x 14-3/8”.
32. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 9 (Part II, Noise)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 10-3/8 x 14-7/16”.
33. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 24 (Part III, Rhythm)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 10-15/16 x 15”.
34. On Kawara, *Events in a Warehouse No. 28 (Part III, Rhythm)*, 1954, pencil on paper, 21-5/16 x 30-5/16”.
35. On Kawara’s illustration from his essay, “Essay: Dream of Cinemascope,” *Bijutsu Techo* 115 (October 1956).
36. On Kawara, *Butcher’s Wife*, 1952, oil on canvas, 51-15/16 x 34-1/4”.

37. On Kawara, *Death Mask No. 4*, 1955, pencil on paper.
38. On Kawara, *Death Mask No. 22*, c.1956, pencil on paper.
39. On Kawara, *Smallpox*, 1952, pencil on paper, 10-3/4 x 14-3/8”.
40. Yamashita Kikuji, *Story of Akebono Village*, 1953, oil on canvas, 54-3/4 x 85-5/8”.
41. Furusawa Iwami, *Song of Reliance* (Hyou kyoku), 1948.
42. Ikeda Tatsuo, *Child Genius* (Shindo), 1956, watercolor, pen on paper, 15-1/8 x 11-9/16”.
43. On Kawara, *Dump*, 1954, pencil on paper, 23-7/16 x 30-3/16”.
44. On Kawara, *Come on...My House*, 1955, oil on canvas, 50 x 72-3/8”.
45. On Kawara, *Birth of the Illegitimate Child*, 1955, oil on canvas, 52-3/4 x 77-1/2”.
46. Fernand Léger, *Three Figures*, 1924, oil on canvas, 51-3/4 x 51-3/4”.
47. A page of a daily newspaper showing a daily portion of a novel with an illustration (middle section), 1958.
48. On Kawara, *Pregnant Woman*, 1953, pencil on paper, 13-7/16 x 12-3/4”.
49. On Kawara, *Pregnant Woman*, 1954, oil on canvas, 55-7/8 x 53-3/4”.
50. Advertisement of the “*insatsu kaiga* (printed painting)” No. 2, *Human and Painting No. 2*, in *Bijutsu Techo* (1959); with a phrase, “A painting is expensive but everyone can buy it...Take an original artwork, *insatsu kaiga*, not a reproduction, to your room....”
51. Advertisement of the “*insatsu kaiga* (printed painting)” No.1, *Human and Painting No. 1*, in *Bijutsu Techo* (1958); with Takiguchi Shuzo’s comment.
52. An illustrative page showing stages of “*insatsu kaiga* (printed painting)”;
from *Bijutsu Techo* (1959), special edition.
53. An illustrative page showing stages of “*insatsu kaiga* (printed painting)”;
from *Bijutsu Techo* (1959), special edition.
54. Kawara’s *I Got Up At* series; shown entitled *Pictorial Diary* in the catalogue of the “9th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan” (1969).
55. Yayoi Kusama, *Walking Piece*, 1966.

56. Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece*, 1965, Carnegie Hall, New York City.
57. Shigeko Kubota, *Vagina Painting*, 1965.
58. Yoko Ono, *Instructions for Painting*, 1962; "Painting in Three Stanzas" exhibited at Sogetsu Art Center, Tokyo, 1962.
59. Shusaku Arakawa, *Remembering the Past No. 1*, 1958.
60. Shusaku Arakawa, *Remembering the Past No. 2*, 1958.
61. Shusaku Arakawa, *Untitled (Endurance 2)*, 1958.
62. Shusaku Arakawa, *Portrait No. 1*, 1961-2, oil, acrylic, pencil on canvas, 73-3/16 x 48-13/16".
63. Shusaku Arakawa, *Untitled*, 1969.
64. On Kawara's 1966 journal, showing one of the photographs of his studio.
65. On Kawara, *Location*, 1965, liquitex on canvas, 32-7/8 x 38-9/16".
66. Kawara in his Tokyo studio in the mid 1950s.
67. Kawara's portrait of 1965; illustrated in Honma Masayoshi's essay, "On Kawara Thereafter-A Visit to His Studio in New York," *Bijutsu Techo* (December 1965).
68. Henning Weidemann's photographs showing the process of Kawara's date painting process, 1992.
69. On Kawara, *Drawing No. 69*, 1964.
70. On Kawara, *Drawing No. 116*, 1964.
71. Cover of Kawara's 1964 drawing collection box.
72. On Kawara, *EGG*, 1964, pencil on paper.
73. One of Kawara's last drawings from his 1964 drawing series.
74. On Kawara, *Drawing No. 7*, showing an airmail envelope sent by N.E. Figueroa in Mexico City, 1964.
75. On Kawara, *Drawing No. 139*, 1964.

76. On Kawara, *Drawing No. 126*, 1964.
77. On Kawara, *On-Language No. 1*, 1964.
78. On Kawara, *ON-Language No. 2*, 1964.
79. On Kawara, *ON-Language No. 4*, 1964.
80. On Kawara, *Dictionary of ON-Language (ON-Language No. 5)*, 1964.
81. On Kawara, *ON-Language No. 7*, 1964.
82. On Kawara, *ON-Language No. 8*, 1964.
83. On Kawara, *Calendar of 100 Years (Drawing No. 177)*, 1964.
84. On Kawara, *Sundays of 100 years (Drawing No. 178)*, 1964.
85. Robert Smithson, *Second Mirror Displacement*, Yucatan, Mexico, 1969.
86. Stanley Brouwn, *This Way Brouwn*, 1969; originally begun in 1962.
87. Douglas Huebler, *Site Sculpture Project, Variable Piece # 1*, New York City, 1968.
88. On Kawara, *Composition of Words for a Catalogue (or Arrangement of Meanings for a Catalogue)*, 1965.
89. Kawara's selection of poetic phrases for his questionnaire from *Bijutsu Techo* (Spring 1959), special edition.
90. Hans Haacke, *Milwaukee Visitors' Profile*, 1969-70.
91. On Kawara, *Title*, 1965, liquitex on canvas, 47x52-3/8", 52-3/8x64" each; installation view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1995.
92. On Kawara, *Code*, 1965.
93. On Kawara, *Code Painting*, 1965 (destroyed), liquitex on canvas.
94. On Kawara, *Code in Braille*, 1995.
95. Art & Language, *38 Paintings (Painting No. 11)*, 1966.
96. Lawrence Weiner, *Statements*, 1968.

INTRODUCTION

Since his departure from his native Japan in 1959, the artist On Kawara (b.1933) has traveled to more than ninety cities all over the world, gradually imposing on himself a nomadic life and refusing to be identified with one culture. He has been migrating through the world like a nomad to make “date paintings” inscribed with the local language of the place where he stays.¹ Making traveling an essential part of living and making art, and obsessively using language as a medium and site of the author’s presence, he not only obscures the boundary between living and creating but also addresses how culture and language construct the idea of identity. Yet his frequent traveling has been his way of cultivating an awareness of the self and insisting on the preeminence of the individual, as opposed to the systems of the external world that constantly threaten to co-opt its force. For an artist who went through the war years of the 1940s, the existentialist 50s, and the internationally competitive 1960s, first-person based, autobiographical approaches have become indispensable to his self-portrayal as a de-nationalized and de-centralized “citizen of the world.”²

Kawara’s status of becoming “inter-national,” or residing in a space between national and cultural borderlines, developed gradually as his traveling outside of Japan turned into a long, eventually permanent sojourn.³ The longer he stayed away from his home, the more he endeavored to shake off any attachments as if he was forced by cultural transition and translation. After a period of experimenting with language (from 1957 to 1966)—inventing illogical essays or expelling the Japanese language from his work—he created serial, autobiographical works that reflected the unattached status of a wandering artist. Among them are the journals *I Read* (1966-1979) (Fig. 1), *I Met* (1968-1979) (Fig.

2), *I Went* (1968-1979) (Fig. 3), a postcard project *I Got Up At* (1968-1979) (Fig. 4), and a telegram series *I Am Still Alive* (1970-presently discontinued) (Fig. 5). All of these begin with the word “I,” and are designed to continue until he dies or is otherwise unable to continue the projects. His other book-based projects, such as *One Million Years-Past* (1969) (Fig. 6) and *One Million Years-Future* (1981) also show Kawara’s presence by framing human history into two separate million epochs with a gap of twelve years that signifies the author’s intervention. His *One Hundred Year Calendar* (1969 - present) (Fig. 7) condenses the artist’s life into a grid-patterned chart, eliminating the superfluous details of his life. In the center of all these works lies his *Today* series—better known as the date paintings—which began on January 6, 1966 (Fig. 8). This life-long project consists of his painting on a monochrome canvas the date of the day in the language local to his location, or in Esperanto if the local language is not Roman-based. After he finishes the painting, he keeps it in a box with a piece of a local newspaper. This daily painting project ends when he records details of the painting, such as the size of the canvas and the background color, in an accompanying “subtitle journal,” a journal in which he also draws upon his personal observations, private notes, and newspaper articles in addition to subtitles.

Starting from the premise that his “inter-national” and “inter-cultural” self-portrayal links a modernist tradition of self-portraiture to a postmodern model of a migrating, hybrid identity, this study examines Kawara’s autobiographical art from 1952 until the present, from his artistic debut in Japan to recent projects such as *Pure Consciousness* (1998-) (Fig. 9) and recordings of *One Million Years* (1993-). I begin with an examination of how Kawara understood the relations between the individual and the

social in the aftermath of the World War Two in Japan, and how he attempted to reach his audience through “printed painting (*insatsu kaiga*)” under the historical burden that “new” Japanese art should match the new Japan after its defeat. I discuss how his decision to travel outside Japan led to his nomadic style of living and art-making in the trajectory of Conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s, specifically in relation to the concentration of artists in New York, and in comparison to artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and Daniel Buren, for whom travel was also integral. Further, I examine how engagement with language as a site of identity became crucial to Kawara’s projects, and distinguished him from other language-based Conceptual artists such as the Art & Language group, Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner, and Douglas Huebler. Finally, this study traces how Kawara’s rearticulation of a self detached from institutions evolved into his virtual disappearance in the early 1970s—a disappearance he thought crucial to becoming a seeker of knowledge through art.

The most significant contribution of this study is that it introduces and translates Kawara’s writings and essays written in Japanese, which have thus far remained unknown to the English-speaking audience. *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting* (1962) and *Composition of Words for a Catalogue* (1965) (Fig. 88) (which I discuss in Chapter Four) are, especially, important works, as they link his last projects in Japan to his later word-based projects. These essays provide a significant clue to how Kawara became obsessed with language, the major vehicle for his Conceptual work after 1964. They also reveal how his priority shifted socially oriented art to art as a process of asserting the self. These newly-found literatures lead to my second contribution: I discuss Kawara’s entire oeuvre from 1952 to the present, with attention to how identity

functions as a cultural, linguistic construction, and how autobiographical configurations of the self compared to socio-political ones. The scale of this examination has not been done so far, although several Japanese critics' and curators' short essays have attempted to understand his work in terms of time, traveling and language.⁴ I believe that my approach will further the understanding of his work before and after 1964 in a more coherent way, overcoming the rupture at 1964, the year that most Kawara studies and exhibitions cite as the beginning of his language-based work.

This dissertation takes a form of monographic study although chapters are organized mainly thematically and partly chronologically.

Two Retrospectives

In early 1998, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo held a large retrospective entitled "On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964-1995." Originally organized at Le Nouveau Musée/Institut d'Art Contemporain in Villeurbanne, France, in 1996, the exhibition had traveled to three other European museums before reaching its last venue in the artist's native country.⁵ This large-scale retrospective for "a citizen of the world" changed as it moved to each venue, requiring the coordinated efforts of international museum officials. Kawara was also involved in the selection of works and in the collection of essays for the accompanying catalogue.⁶ The catalogue summed up the Conceptual artist's career of more than thirty years in an array of documentary photographs of previous exhibitions and a wide, multi-lingual selection of essays and criticisms on the artist. While the essays provided the diverse perspectives of international critics and curators, the selected illustrations of past exhibitions, chronologically arranged, offered a clue into how

Kawara had been presented and wanted to present his work in an anti-historical, thematic context since the 1970s.⁷

When the exhibition traveled to Japan, its catalogue was reedited and republished for the Japanese public with the addition of Japanese translations—an addition to European languages such as French and German that contrasts with Kawara's long commitment to avoiding the Japanese language. The Japanese catalogue introduced Kawara as “one of the best-known artists from Japan in the world,” thus characterizing Kawara as a long-absent son of Japan.⁸ Yet the introduction also presented Kawara as an artist with “unshakeable identity” who owned “elements of both the analytic intelligence of the West and the synthesizing intuition of the East.”⁹

The retrospective featured Kawara's work from 1964—the year he had begun a series of drawings after having had a revelation in the Altamira caves, and extended the scope of his work to words and symbols—to 1995, the year when the show was conceived. This periodization focused on his gradual progression to Conceptualism from his intensive drawing series of 1964. Like his earlier retrospective “On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity 1963-1979” (1980), this retrospective omitted Kawara's works before the early 1960s, specifically his figurative paintings and drawings from the 1950s.¹⁰ Unlike the 1980 retrospective which took Kawara's work from 1963 as a turning point, this exhibition marked Kawara's turn to Conceptualism in 1964 rather than 1963, indicating that there remained uncertainty regarding the exact date of origin of his Conceptual art.

This framing of Kawara's career as beginning in 1964 reflected the very question that this study aims to answer: how we should see his entire oeuvre as a whole. If the above

exhibitions embraced discontinuity, acknowledging his transformation from a figurative, (sur)realist painter to a Conceptual artist, this dissertation takes the opposite perspective, establishing a connection between the two periods through the lens of the narrative impulse of the self.

Continuity and Discontinuity

Kawara's work can be divided into several categories: a Japanese period (1952-1959), a Mexican period (1959-1962), a European period (1963-64), a New York period (1965-68), and a nomadic period (1968-present). His works from the Japanese period do appear radically different from his later works in their formats, messages, and methods. As the two above retrospectives revealed, a rigorous transformation in his work occurred sometime around 1964 while he was traveling in Europe. The drastic difference between Kawara's works before and after 1964 is another factor that motivated this study. To address this issue, I examine his early works made in Japan, which are mostly in public or private collections in Japan, and studies on Kawara published in Japanese.

Japanese critics often find a continuity between Kawara's Japanese period and his post-Japanese period. Familiar with the social and cultural contexts of Kawara's work from the 1950s, they focus on Kawara's repeated use of seriality, his defiance of painting norms, and his use of bold subjects such as murder. Masashi Miura views the date painting subtitles registered in Kawara's journal as reminiscent of his earlier *The Bathroom* (Figs. 10-18) series in their intimate descriptions of his personal thoughts using "I."¹¹ Yokoyama Tadashi points out Kawara's persistence in maintaining the "handmade" quality of his work, from his early drawings to his later "printed painting"

(Figs. 19, 20, and 21) and his typewritten journals (Fig. 22).¹² Yokoyama also argues that Kawara's concept of time and space, evident in his date painting series, differs from Western system of logic and stays closer to a Japanese sense of openness—a lack of beginning or end in framing time.¹³ Hiraide Takashi supports Yokoyama's argument by pointing out that the Japanese sense of time and space, in as much as such a thing can be characterized, helps to understand Kawara's art in the 1960s.¹⁴ Yamada Satoshi focuses on Kawara's resistance to the conventions of painting, from his early pencil works to his mature date paintings.¹⁵ Matsuoka Seigow names Kawara "New York *Hijiri*," in reference to Kawara's close observation of time, which resembles the acts of *Hijiri*, a type of a man of knowledge known in Japan to be able to read and predict the patterns of nature for ordinary people, especially for fishermen and farmers.¹⁶

Kawara himself has expressed his wish that his work done after his Japanese period should not be categorized as "Japanese." In 1994, a major survey exhibition of contemporary Japanese art was held in a downtown branch of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. "Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky" assembled a massive grouping of contemporary Japanese art, from Gutai to Yasumasa Morimura, compiled by several experts in the field, such as Alexandra Munroe and Reiko Tomii. Kawara refused to be included in the show, giving the reason that he did not want to be contextualized with Japanese art. Considering the fact that other well-known Japanese artists in New York—such as Shusaku Arakawa and Yoko Ono—participated in this show, Kawara's refusal was unusual enough to be noticed. Kawara also refused to join the "Global Conceptualism" (1999) show, a survey exhibition of multiple conceptualisms in the world, as he would have been included in the category of Japanese

conceptual art. Kawara's works, borrowed from other private collections (such as that of the dealer Andrea Rosen), were eventually included in the context of American conceptualism.

Understanding and accessing Kawara in his native country takes a different turn as opposed to the one in the Euro-American countries. Many of his early works have been shown together with his late works largely because many of his works from 1950s until the present are available. Japanese museums have been assiduously collecting Kawara's work for their permanent collections. To honor his status as "one of the best-known artists from Japan in the world,"¹⁷ his works are being purchased and stored in numerous art institutions: Nagoya City Art Museum, located near Kawara's birthplace, has accumulated an extensive range of his early works, from 1953 to his recent date paintings; Chiba City Museum of Art recently purchased one of Kawara's earliest significant works, *Thinking Man* (1952) (Fig. 23); the Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo has the largest Kawara collection in Japan, including most of his early signature works, *The Bathroom* (1953-54) series (Figs. 10-18) and the *Events in the Warehouse* (1954) series (Figs. 24-34), both of which were donated by Kawara himself in 1965. Through their determined acquisitions, the museums aim to historicize Kawara's art in Japanese art history, or more precisely, in a history of art as seen through Japanese eyes.

The conflict between Kawara's attempt to avoid participating in shows that contextualize him nationalistically and the efforts of institutions to contextualize his art in such terms helps to explain why Kawara has been distancing himself even more severely from museums, exhibitions, and cultural centers. Facing the gap between his own intentions and processes those of art institutions, he has employed since the 1960s a

tactic to distance himself from institutionalized authority and power. He recognized early on the devouring greed of institutions, starting from when he was gaining fame in Japan. His departure from Tokyo, where he had become established as one of the most promising artists of the 1950s, was just the beginning of his attempt to abdicate all of his given privilege and avoid any labeling, including “Japanese.” After leaving Japan, he did not return for twelve years, and that visit lasted only a month. His homecoming in the winter of 1970-1971 was a return of a “citizen of the world” who willingly used Esperanto instead of Japanese for his date paintings as a move to practice his new identity.

Revisionist Conceptual Art History

Recent studies on Conceptual art motivated me to pursue this topic.¹⁸ Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson’s *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (1999) presents a collection of essays by Conceptual artists who contributed to the shaping of that amorphous movement in the 1960s.¹⁹ Michael Newman and Jon Bird’s *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (1999) collects essays by new groups of authors who “rewrite” the multi-faceted movement by reassessing the generally accepted aspects of the historical art movement and geographically expanding the centers of Conceptual art to non-western worlds.²⁰ This effort to include “other” origins was, as Bird and Newman acknowledge, initially inspired by the show “Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s” (1999, Queens Museum of Art, New York). The exhibition recognized the multiple origins of Conceptual art, countering the view that Conceptual art was centered in Euro-American cities like New York and Paris. Several international curators and critics were

asked to assess the political and social roots of Conceptual art and reevaluate the legacy of international work from Africa, Australia, Japan, Korea, and North and South Americas.²¹ *Rewriting Conceptual Art* extended this reexamining of global, yet locally-specific Conceptualism to Conceptual art practices in other parts of the world, such as Italy and Latin America.

These exhibitions and publications move away from the histories presented in shows such as “Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975” (1993, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles), “Art Conceptuel I” (1988, Musée d’art contemporain, Bordeaux), and “Art conceptuel, une perspective” (1989, Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris), all of which focused on western, Euro-American Conceptual art.²² While the exhibitions from the 1980s and early 90s focused on how Conceptual art’s ideals have been realized or failed, the more recent exhibitions have uncovered the diverse ways in which Conceptual artists around the world embraced the political, philosophical, and the personal for broader reasons than the desire to move away from modernism or formalism. These new perspectives of the exhibition organizers have sought the forces that drove art as idea in the anti-Vietnam war sentiment and other regional and international political contexts omnipresent in the 1960s and 1970s.

While Kawara has been included in most of these recent exhibitions, his name has been mentioned only briefly in the accompanying articles or publications. These articles and publications acknowledge the fact that Kawara began to use words in his drawings and paintings but do not explore why he became engaged in such projects, nor do they shed any light on his extensive traveling or experiments with controlling his identity. In this thesis, I locate Kawara in and around the language-based Conceptualism represented

by Joseph Kosuth, for one, and argue that Kawara's multiple language-based projects occupy a unique position in the formative years of this emergent avant-garde. His association with Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, and other language-based Conceptualists between 1967 and 1969 often placed him in a rather complex situation. The most evident problem was that Kawara's works were not necessarily oriented toward a philosophical inquiry into the nature and conditions of art, an inquiry promoted by Kosuth.²³ Rather, Kawara's concern was more personal, and consisted of an absorbing search for communicative modes to gain absolute independence from the world encircling him. His strategy of seclusion contrasts with the extensive writing practiced by Conceptual artists such as Kosuth or Dan Graham, who treated writing as integral to the delivery of their ideas. Further, while numerous Kawara's contemporaries, such as Robert Morris and Sol LeWitt, evolved their art from minimalist or abstract painting and sculpture, Kawara transformed himself from a figurative, expressionistic painter to a word-based artist. I find it useful to trace how Kawara's art evolved in order to understand the distinctive nature of his autobiographical approach, an approach that differs from contemporaneous conceptualists' philosophical and social methodologies.

Self-portrait or Autobiography

Kawara's life is his primary subject. His art refers to the activities of getting out of bed in the morning and meeting friends and families.²⁴ On a typical day before September 1979 (when he had to abruptly stop making several "I" series due to a loss of his stamp kit), Kawara's daily schedule would go as follows: He would wake up, check the time, and print 'I GOT UP AT 9.23 A.M. ON KAWARA' on two postcards, which

would bear the stamped addresses of the artist as the sender and two recipients (Fig. 4). He would then paint a date painting that required most of the day to finish (Fig. 8). During a break from the date painting, he would type the numbers of 500 years on a page for his book *One Million Years-Past* (Fig. 6). Sometime during the day, he would leave his studio (either his New York studio or a hotel room) to mail the two postcards, and to send off a telegram with the message "I AM STILL ALIVE. ON KAWARA" (Fig. 5) to yet another recipient. On his way back to the studio, he would buy a daily newspaper. He would read the newspaper and cut out the articles he had read for the journal *I Read* (Fig. 1). Later in the afternoon, he would make a photocopy of the map of the city where he was staying and mark on the map in a red line his movement of the day for the journal *I Went* (Fig. 3). Kawara would finish his date painting before midnight (if he did not finish it before 12 am, he would discard the work). When he successfully completed a date painting, he would stamp on his calendar in a journal accompanying the project, and paste a sample of the background color used for the date painting. In the same journal, he would type the date; a subtitle of the date painting; an Alphabet letter corresponding to the size of the canvas (there are five types of canvases that he prefers to use); and the total number of date paintings as of that day. In another journal entitled *I Met*, he would also type the names of the people he met that day. He would also put a color-coded dot onto his *One Hundred Year Calendar* (a yellow dot if he spent the day without any work; a green dot if he made one date painting, and a red dot, if he produced more than one painting).²⁵

The personal nature of his Conceptual art was recognized early on by Kosuth who associated with and introduced Kawara as his colleague in his well-known article, "Art

After Philosophy” (1969), which I discuss further in Chapter Four. In that essay, Kosuth acknowledged Kawara’s “private” intention as well as Kawara’s role as one of the pioneers of Conceptualism:

On Kawara, a Japanese artist who has been continuously traveling around the world since 1959, has been doing a highly conceptualized kind of art since 1964. On Kawara, who began with paintings lettered with one simple word, went to ‘questions’ and ‘codes’, and paintings such as the listing of a spot on the Sahara Desert in terms of its longitude and latitude, is most well known for his “date” paintings...On Kawara’s reasons for his art are extremely private, and he has consciously stayed away from any publicity or public art-world exposure.²⁶

Kosuth observed that Kawara’s extensive traveling and solitary lifestyle were the basis for his language-based works. Later, Lucy Lippard focused on the biographical element in Kawara’s works, attending to “a sense of Kawara’s life and persona” found in his work.²⁷ The repetition in the multiple series, she found, reveals the part of Kawara’s personality or character that insists on several limited themes. Linda Weintraub distinguished Kawara as one of the artists who pursued the domain of autobiography even after diverse formalistic changes in the twentieth century.²⁸ Like many modern artists who professed to make self-portraits while disdaining to produce any direct physical resemblance, Kawara employed his “I” to describe who he was through what he did. Japanese critic Minemura Toshiaki also defined Kawara’s oeuvre as the self-portraiture of an artist attempting to hide his subjectivity from the surface of his work, and to create a homeland inside his work, a place where most of his identity is at stake.²⁹ Minemura viewed Kawara’s mode of self-portrayal as following the model of James Joyce’s *A Portrait of a Young Artist*, a portrait of a young man who finds his identity by leaving his native country.³⁰ This search for new identity is connected to Kawara’s attraction to communicative modes, or “codes” as he preferred to call them, driven by his

desire to “hide the subject of the artist as an apparent element of his work.”³¹ His notorious tactic of giving almost no interviews and yet proliferating the “I” in his work gives a glimpse of his desire to be at once both lost and found. As I will discuss later, Kawara’s “no interview” policy does not extend to a group of less than six. He often meets and converses with people as long as they come in a group fewer than six. Yet when he faces questions regarding his works and life, he evades the questions.

My use of the term “self-portrait,” in relation to Kawara’s practice, is based on the idea that the expression of the constructed self is similar to that of its literary counterpart, autobiography. As William Howarth argued once that “an *autobiography* is a *self-portrait*,” the two genres can call for a detachment and objectification of the artist’s self.³² The artist looks at and studies him/herself as if looking a mirror. In the process of objectification, the artist sees him/herself as “the other.” The artist selectively focuses on his/herself by omitting, emphasizing, and extending memories and realities. The final portrayal of the artist’s self is therefore never truly unbiased; it necessarily results in a constructed image of the artist, an image filtered by the author.³³ Several factors work in the process of filtering: the sense of self, history and tradition, and motives for self-portraiture.³⁴ Although self-portraiture and autobiography generally use distinct materials and forms—e.g., paint versus language—they share a common ground of memory, dream and vision, all of which are governed by time and space. Like self-portraiture, autobiography has a long history in all cultures and has been a resource of cultural identity. The genre has been utilized to tell stories of ordinary and extraordinary men and women, who have narrated their lives in their own vernacular. Thus, both histories of autobiography and of self-portraiture reflect a history of specific human minds.

Kawara's self-portrayal seems to be indebted to several traditions. One of them is the tradition of the modern self-portrait, specifically that from the late nineteenth century. Claiming greater autonomy for art and artists, certain artists forged a model for a modern depiction of selfhood in order to realize a more insightful revelation of individual personalities. Beginning notably with Vincent Van Gogh, who was enthusiastically immersed in self-portraiture, modern artists including Picasso and Matisse found a freedom of self-exploration in the genre, recognizing self-portraiture as the most effective means of embodying their own identity both as an artist and as an individual.³⁵ On account of the discourse of psychoanalysis initiated by Freud, modern artists' scrutiny of the self as uniquely idiosyncratic individual began to take on "the force of an intellectual imperative" as a means of revealing fundamental truths about human nature.³⁶ The experimentation with self-portraiture moved further onto a level at which artists leaned toward more radical methods of visual language such as the disguise of one's original identity and the discarding of figuration. Artists often obscured their vulnerable selves via alter egos and disguises. Among the examples of contrived self-portrait characters are Picasso's Harlequins, Max Ernst's dadamax, Marcel Duchamp's Rose Sélavy, and Claes Oldenberg's Ray Gun. In another vein, one could include in this category Sol LeWitt's photographic collection of personal belongings, and Bruce Naumann's staged self-portraits referencing Duchamp.³⁷ Inventive yet attentive to the tradition of self-portraiture, these artists' self-expressions traverse a vast scope of intimate self-explanation.

Kawara's overt use of "I" in his work differs from the above examples, as they mostly play with direct and indirect disclosure of the artist, approaching self-portraiture as a way

of enhancing the artists' own personae. His autobiographical approach of employing a simple, descriptive approach using everyday language, among others, leans toward his native culture. Japanese literary history provides a clue to Kawara's preference for using "I." Japanese literature has a strong tradition of the diary, the travel diary—that dates back to Heian period (9th century-12th century)—and above all, *shishosetsu* or the "I-novel" in the modern period. Influenced by the European naturalist idea of allegiance to true and direct description, *shishosetsu* took the form of confessional personal testimony, as in the personal letter or diary during the Meiji Period (1868-1912), the period in which Japan went through a severe westernization in all dimensions of its social and educational systems.³⁸ Kawara plays with the form of *shishosetsu* when he documents what he reads, who he meets, where he goes, when he gets up, etcetera: so suggests Hiraide Takashi, a Japanese critic.³⁹ He is, so far, the only critic who suggests that Kawara's daily ritual practices resemble those of Japanese "I-novel" writers. Hiraide argues that in *shishosetsu*, the subject "I," through it often bends the promise of realism maintaining the view that it is ultimately a form of fiction, is portrayed as tightly amalgamated with the cosmos and with nature, just as Kawara portrays himself in his "I" series.⁴⁰

Influenced, more specifically, by the German Ich-Roman, the "I-novel" has been seen as "a Japanized version of European naturalism" or, conversely, as "a distortion of literary naturalism imported from the west."⁴¹ Either way, its charm attracted many Japanese intellectuals; indeed, almost every modern Japanese writer has experimented with the form at some point in his or her career. Regardless of *shishosetsu*'s status as an indigenous genre, Japanese writers' experiments with it are part of a collective practice to establish a mode of modern authorship that treats the personal as anti-institutional and

anti-traditional. The advance of *shishosetsu* among the writers of the twentieth century eventually resulted in establishing the genre as culturally coded as a form of critical resistance to society rather than a mere experimental form of literature. In short, the genre eventually became a quintessential form of twentieth-century Japanese literary and intellectual expression, as it adopts the autobiographical narrative in order to explore modern individualistic authorship in reaction to the community-oriented traditional culture of Japan.

As a form of autobiography, *shishosetsu* has distinct features compared to its often lengthy western counterpart, the “autobiography.” *Shishosetsu* reveals the most intimate, personal side of the author in an attempt to touch the reader’s heart.⁴² Rather than providing a seamless, extensive narrative, *shishosetsu* consists of a series of short episodes from the author’s life woven together chronologically or conjunctively.⁴³ The narrator tells stories to evoke “[t]ouching, pathetic, beautiful, moving” sensations for the reader, thus creating a “familiar” mood grounding in the traditional Japanese literature.⁴⁴ This *shishosetsu* sentimentality is found when the narrator often describes an experience in which he or she has not triumphed, but rather suffered in poverty, anxiety, or frustration. The concept of *aware*, or *mono no aware*—“beautiful pathos”—is common in the Japanese artistic tradition. Extremely narcissistic, the narrator portrays him/herself as a suffering human being often overwhelmed by melancholy caused by fleeting, ephemeral events and accidents. Some of *shishosetsu* authors are known to have psychological disorders such as schizophrenic symptoms or severe voluntary alienation.⁴⁵ It is the very personal aspect of the “I-novel” that Socialist realists criticized after World War II when Japan was struggling to grasp its own future. The anti-social, anti-historical,

and anti-intellectual tendencies of the autobiographic modality displeased critics who sought for a more powerful, socialist message in art.⁴⁶ The genre survived such criticism, however, and remains a popular form of making personal confessions in present-day Japan.

The Kawara Myth: A Silent Man

Kawara's distaste for outspokenness and preference for a relatively solitary life have helped to create a mystical aura around him. Critics frequently emphasize this aspect of his life and work. Lippard's 1977 essay on Kawara called his work "very pure and Japanese."⁴⁷ The author found Kawara's *I Am Still Alive* telegram series reflective of the "myth of Oriental detachment."⁴⁸ Numerous other critics also have tried to detect a Japanese sensitivity in his art. René Denizot once said that Kawara's eyes view "the West as a mime, as an absolute other"; portraying himself as a permanent outsider, Kawara took up the role of an outside observer of the world of floating daily images and news.⁴⁹ Karel Schampers suggested that such aloofness originated from Kawara's cultural background; that his art dwelled in "a kind of neutral no-man's land" in which Western "physical concreteness and direct perceptibility" mixed with an Eastern "intrinsic, spiritual charge."⁵⁰ Calling Kawara's date paintings "a form of meditation," Schampers argued that Kawara's comment on the contrast between Eastern or Asian art and Western art—Eastern art's quality of detachment, opaqueness, and even concealment as opposed to its counterpart's individualistic, analytical quality—would explain his choice of painting as a daily performance.⁵¹

Kawara, in his would-be “no-man’s land,” or location-less and nameless state, has preoccupied himself with a vast array of knowledge and information, such as recent developments in physics, cosmology, language theory, etc.⁵² Some commentators see him as “an alien”; a Japanese novelist once called Kawara “a spaceman-like earthman” after meeting him.⁵³ Some of people who have encountered Kawara reported that he cared about diverse topics from physics to color to language, thus raising the question whether his art reflects, for one, his manifest interest in science and pseudo-science.⁵⁴

Kawara once acknowledged that his living could be comparable to the solitary life style of a monk. This comparison remains figurative since his wife Hiroko Hiraoka accompanied most of his traveling after 1968, specifically between 1968 and 1979. What he meant by living like a monk is that he wished to pass through this life without any reservations like a Buddhist monk who meditates upon a mountain “until the mountain disappears and the entirety of the world is perceived as uninterrupted sameness,” and who travels until “the tangible world of objects dissolves.”⁵⁵

Kawara’s secluded life style should be thus understood as relative, especially compared to those of his contemporaneous artists who expanded their voices not just to interviews but also to writings and lectures. Kawara’s policy of not talking to any group of people whose total number exceeds six was susceptible, as his traveling continued, to a snow ball evolvement into a myth of silence.⁵⁶ His habit of not attending opening receptions for his own exhibitions accelerated this myth.⁵⁷ Yet it is true that he found the constant demand to explain his work to people and to the media “burdensome and senseless.”⁵⁸ Despite this myth of self-imposed isolation, Kawara associates with people and is often involved in the curatorial process for his exhibitions or in creating his

exhibition catalogues.⁵⁹ His *I Met* (Fig. 2) series thus documents such social encounters, recording the names of people he met during the day.

Such a myth or misunderstanding often creates more misunderstandings and even factual errors. Some examples of wrong information about Kawara are: Minemura mistakenly wrote in his note that Kawara was associating with conceptual artists such as Dan Graham, Sol LeWitt, and Joseph Kosuth around 1964 and 1965,⁶⁰ but Kawara's journal of date paintings reports that it was on October 12, 1967 that for the first time, "Dan Graham brought Joseph Kosuth to my apartment this afternoon"; and Lippard has written that Kawara's *I Read* series was begun "in the middle of 1967" when Kawara was bored with his date painting journal,⁶¹ but the series actually started in 1966, a little after his date paintings. Frustrated with the circulation of incorrect information, Kawara took the opportunity to try to correct the record when René Block published a book on him in 1987.⁶²

Writers who have met Kawara often reported that the artist, contrary to his reputation as a hermit, was more open and spoke a lot more than they had expected.⁶³ Some of the people who had an opportunity to talk with Kawara felt "a gift or a responsibility" that they should talk to others about it.⁶⁴ Linda Weintraub is one of them. In her essay on Kawara, she wrote that her meeting with Kawara in January 1996 had been initiated by the artist himself, and that Kawara had spoken for most of the encounter, covering diverse topics such as art, color, religion, and language.⁶⁵ Her description gives a glimpse of how Kawara frustrates interviewers who attempt to create a narrative. Kawara told Weintraub that "both photography and written quotes...congeal events and thus belong to the desolate zone of the past," and that notes are thus futile after an interview.⁶⁶

I had a similar experience in my conversations with Kawara in 2002. In two face-to-face meetings (March 2 and July 5, 2002) that lasted approximately six hours each, and in several telephone conversations, I was able to gain a more detailed view of Kawara's career. His wife, Hiroko Kawahara, accompanied our meetings, and often provided more accurate information on Kawara's traveling history. Most interviewers describe their encounter with the artist as more of a "conversation" than an interview; here I will do the same, in addition to respecting Kawara's wish not to be quoted directly.⁶⁷

* Most non-western names--including Japanese ones--follow the cultural convention of putting the family name in the front. Exceptions are On Kawara, Yoko Ono, Shigeo Kubota, Shusaku Arakawa, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Yayoi Kusama, Yasumasa Morimura, Kenzo Okada, Toshio Odate, Nam June Paik, Teiji Takai, and Kenzo Tange, whose names are frequently circulated in the western manner, and authors such as Masao Miyoshi, and Reiko Tomii who frequently publish in English.

NOTES

¹ Kawara simplified his original Japanese name in the early days of his artistic career in Japan. 1952 works such as *Butcher's Wife* already bear the name On Kawara. His wife, Hiroko Kawahara (a.k.a. Hiroko Hiraoka) uses Kawahara for her last name.

² Lynne Cooke, "On Kawara: One Thousand Days One Million Years," essay for a brochure (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1993), n.p. For this 1993 exhibition of Kawara at Dia, Cooke uses this phrase to explain Kawara's "desire to conflate eastern and western modes of being, the individual and the collective, the anonymous and the particular, and the local and the international," following Jose Librero Stals's first use of the term in "No-Man's-Land," *Tierra de nadie* (Granada: Hospital Real, 1992), 116.

³ The concept of borderline is borrowed from Homi K. Bhaba: "...the borderline work of culture demands an encounter with "newness" that is not part of a continuum of past and present...it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that

innovates and interrupts the performance of the present.” Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 7.

⁴ They include Hiraide Takashi, “Revolution of Moment – On Kawara as Language,” 1995; in *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964–1995* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1996); Miura Masashi, “On Date Painting,” *On Kawara* (Tokyo: Gatodo Gallery, 1986); Minemura Toshiaki, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1,” *Mizue* (March 1981); and Minemura Toshiaki, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2,” *Mizue* (April 1981).

⁵ The three venues are Castello di Rivoli (February 21-March 31, 1997), Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (May 1-June 29, 1997), and Musée d’Art Moderne Villeneuve d’Ascq (September 13-December 15, 1997). The exhibition in Japan was held between January 14 and April 5, 1998 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.

⁶ See the accompanying catalogue, *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964–1995* (Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 1998), published by the museum for the Japanese audience, 5-16.

⁷ One of the most prominent exhibitions was a duo show with Alberto Giacometti. Kawara’s date paintings are displayed among or alongside the Swiss artist’s elongated statues. The existentialist sculptures encounter another existentialist’s paintings of time.

⁸ *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964–1995*, Japanese version, 15-16.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ The retrospective exhibition came to the National Museum of Modern Art in Osaka, Japan in May, 1981 after traveling from the Moderna Museet in Stockholm (October 11-November 23, 1980, curated by Bjorn Springfeldt); to Museum Folkwang, Essen (January 30-March 15, 1981, organized by Zdenek Felix); and to Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (March 22-May 3, 1981, organized by Rudi Fuchs).

¹¹ Miura, n.p.

¹² Yokoyama Tadashi, “At the Junction of Time and Space,” *On Kawara 1952-57 Tokyo* (Tokyo: Parco, 1991), 69.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Hiraide, 518.

¹⁵ Yamada Satoshi, “On Kawara’s Pencil Drawing Series—the Content and the Form of Painting,” *On Kawara 1954, 1954, 1956, Rei Naito 1991*, exhibition catalogue (Nagoya: Nagoya City Art Museum, 1995).

¹⁶ Matsuoka Seigow, “Ars Magna of a Day,” *On Kawara* (Nagoya: Akira Ikeda Gallery, 1984), n.p.

¹⁷ See the accompanying catalogue for the Japanese audience, *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964–1995*, ed. Minami Yusuke (Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 15-16.

¹⁸ The term “conceptual art” has been around since the early 1960s, when it was often meant to point to a conceptual side of paintings seen as not sufficiently expressionistic. Dore Ashton, for instance, referred to the paintings of Larry Poons as “conceptual.” Fluxus found its own early advocate of a “Concept art” in Henry Flynt. Flynt’s text of 1961 (published in La Monte Young, ed., *Anthology* [New York, 1963]) apparently gained currency after, if not because of, the later movement associated with Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Kosuth, and Lawrence Weiner in the U.S. and the group Art & Language in England. According to Roberta Smith (1981), on the other hand, it was Edward Kienholz who coined the term “conceptual art” in the early 1960s, but, as she goes on to indicate, the term received its first theoretical exegesis in 1967 with Sol LeWitt’s “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” (*Artforum* 5/10 [Summer 1967]: 79-83). This text was published the same year as the catalogue *Non-Anthropomorphic Art*, in which the then unknown Kosuth also proposed an art made of “conceptual rather than found material” in notes dated 1966. (Kienholz’s show, “Concept Tableau,” at Dwan Gallery in New York in 1967 featured his *The State Hospital* [1965] and *The Art Show* [1963].)

A 1973 book by Gregory Battcock includes in the category of conceptual art a variety of work from Earth art (Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer), to Joseph Kosuth, Conceptual dance (Kenneth King, Yvonne Rainer), cinema (Les Levine), and music (John Cage). These artists “relate art activity to broad social, ecological, and intellectual concerns.” Preferring the term, “Idea Art” to Conceptual Art, Battcock defined it as encompassing works that do not necessarily “exist as objects,” but can stay in the form of ideas in documentation. The denunciation of object forms indicates “an emphatic rejection of the commercial and consumer aspects in art” shared by various artists. See Gregory Battcock, “Introduction,” *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), 2.

¹⁹ See *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT, 1999). Alberro also published another documentary book along with Patricia Novell, *Recording Conceptual Art: Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelau, Smithson, Weiner by Patricia Novell* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

²⁰ Jon Bird and Michael Newman, “Introduction,” *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. Bird and Newman (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 1.

²¹ Among them were László Beke (Eastern Europe), Chiba Shigeo and Reiko Tomii (Japan), Okwui Enwezor (Africa), Gao Minglu (Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong),

Claude Gintz (Western Europe), Mari Carmen Ramírez (Latin America), Margarita Tupitsyn (Soviet Union), Terry Smith (Australia, New Zealand), Sung Wan-kyung (South Korea), and Peter Wollen (North America).

²² “Reconsidering the Object of Art” addressed the various ways by which artists abandoned conventional approaches to the concept of art. The newly popular media among the artists in question are photographs, writings, and texts rather than paintings or sculptures.

²³ Joseph Kosuth, “Art After Philosophy,” *Studio International* 178/915-917, 1969; reprint in *Art After Philosophy and After* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 27-28.

²⁴ Joshua Decker, “(Re)Reading On Kawara: The Difference of Repetition,” *Flash Art* 163 (3/4, 1992): 87.

²⁵ This description is inspired by Henning Weidemann, “What is a Date Painting?” *On Kawara: June 9, 1991, from “Today” Series (1966-)* (Germany: Cantz Verlag, 1994), 54-55.

²⁶ Kosuth, 27-28.

²⁷ Lucy Lippard, “Just in Time: On Kawara,” *On Kawara 1967* (Los Angeles: Otis Art Institute Gallery, 1977), n.p.

²⁸ Linda Weintraub, “On Kawara: Self-documentation,” *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art’s Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s-1990s* (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, 1996), 52. Here she accounted for Kawara’s long (more than thirty years) career as an exploration of the “tiny domain of autobiography that remains when opinion, mimetic duplication, self-analysis, sensual responses, feelings, attitudes, ego, sentiments, memories, joys, terrors, dreams, and fantasies are eliminated from art.”

²⁹ See Minemura Toshiaki, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1,” *Mizue* (March 1981): 58 and “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2,” *Mizue* (April 1981): 117.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Minemura, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2,” 115-16. As I will explain further in Chapter Four, his gradually deepening interest in language led to his use of words and codes as alternative modes of communication. Codes, for him, were a way to create visually challenging and ambiguous messages. He often replaced written words with brush strokes and dots, as exemplified in *Code* (1965) (Fig. 92), a series of colorful reconfigurations of an essay.

³² William L. Howarth, "Some Principles of Autobiography," *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), 85.

³³ J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, ed., *Modern Portraits: The Self & Others* (New York: Trustees of Columbia University in New York, 1976). xxiii. This exhibition was held at Wildenstein gallery in New York from October 20 to November 28, 1976.

³⁴ Howarth, 86-87.

³⁵ Varnedoe, xi.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, xviii.

³⁸ Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit, *Rituals of Self-Revelation: Shishosetsu as Literary Genre and Socio-Cultural Phenomenon* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996), 3.

³⁹ Hiraide, 518.

⁴⁰ Hiraide, however, concludes that Kawara escaped *shishosetsu* when he rejected his Japanese past as he adopted Esperanto. Here, I argue instead that Kawara maintained the format of *shishosetsu* in his "I" series, which—although split into several different forms.

⁴¹ Edward Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishosetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1988), xvii.

⁴² *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁴³ Hijiya-Kirschnereit, 182.

⁴⁴ Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1961), 503; in Hijiya-Kirschnereit, *Rituals of Self-Revelation: Shishosetsu as Literary Genre and Socio-Cultural Phenomenon*, 189.

⁴⁵ Miyagi Otoy, "Psychology of Shishosetsu" (1953); quoted in Hijiya-Kirschnereit, 273.

⁴⁶ Hijiya-Kirschnereit, 323-4.

⁴⁷ Lippard, "Just in Time: On Kawara," n.p.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ René Denizot, “Painting, or Nothing,” *On Kawara* (Frankfurt am Main: Museum für Moderne Kunst, 1991), 30.

⁵⁰ Karel Schampers, “A Mental Journey in Time,” *On Kawara: Date Paintings in 89 Cities* (Rotterdam: Museum Boyman-van-Benning, 1991), 199.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² David Higginbotham, “Of windows and vases,” *On Kawara: le consortium* (Dijon, 1985), n.p. See also Kathryn Chiong, “Kawara On Kawara,” *October* 90 (Fall, 1999): 72 for argument on location-less or lack of ownership in Kawara.

⁵³ Sahara Jiro, “A Spaceman-Like Earthman” (first appeared in *Geijutsu Shincho*, February, 1972, trans. Sharon Ann Rhoads); see René Denizot, *Mot pour mot: Les images quodidiennes du pouvoir On Kawara au jour le jour* (Paris: Yvon Lambert, 1979), 12-17, in French with English translation.

⁵⁴ Higginbotham, 1985, n.p.

⁵⁵ Weintraub, 57-8.

⁵⁶ It is uncertain why he has chosen the number six as the limit. He once told me during a conversation in March 2002 that the number is his favorite and he applied it to his diagram for the catalogue of *On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1980). Yet when asked what the meaning of the diagram consisted of a hexagon that contains a bee, a turtle and a fly, he simply answered that that should remain in viewers’ space.

⁵⁷ Kawara is known to have had about one hundred one-person exhibitions but he once said that he had seen only fourteen. Weintraub, 56.

⁵⁸ Roland Waspe, “On the Way: 1964 Paris – New York,” *On Kawara: 1964 Paris – New York Drawings* (St. Gallen, Switzerland: Kustverein St. Gallen Kunstmuseum, 1997), 13.

⁵⁹ His recent publication *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964–1995* is exemplary. The book credited Kawara and his wife’s contribution to selecting essays.

⁶⁰ Minemura, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1,” 58.

⁶¹ Lippard, “Just in Time: On Kawara,” n.p.

⁶² René Block, “On Kawara,” *On Kawara: Berlin 1976-1986* (Berlin: Daadgalerie, 1987).

⁶³ Okada Takahiko described Kawara as far from reserved after meeting him both in New York and Tokyo, "Presentation of Sign as Action of Recognition," *Gendaishi Techo* [Modern Poetry Note] 10 (October 1983): 98-9. Another detailed description about Kawara can be found in Kato Taneo, "Proof of Living One Day during One Million Years," *Nikkei Art* (February 1998). Linda Weintraub once reported her experience of Kawara's long oral presentation in a bar in New York. See Weintraub, "On Kawara: Self-documentation," 56. Lippard, on the other hand, had found Kawara "quiet," always accompanied by Hiroko. See Lippard "Just in Time: On Kawara," n.p.

⁶⁴ Weintraub, 56.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Kawara's flamboyant style of speaking and wide range of topics eventually left her to ask afterwards: "Was it a performance or a confession? Had he given me a gift or a responsibility?" She understood his willingness to meet and talk as a signal that Kawara approved of her sharing his words with other readers. See *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Due to Kawara's request not to take any notes during our conversations, most of my notes were written immediately after our meetings.

CHAPTER 1

DREAM OF DEATH AND QUEST FOR IDENTITY

A Thinking Man: Dream of Death and (Perhaps) Hope

In October 1956, at the age of twenty three, Kawara wrote an essay about a dream he had had after a long discussion with his friend and movie critic, Mr. S, about dreaming in color of horrific scenes.¹ In the dream, he saw “a large number of enormous, flaccid white masses” that suddenly spread out leaving him unable to see.² The mass was an organism like bacteria that grows endlessly with its reproductive ability. Facing the expanding organic form, he felt overwhelmed and uneasy as if he had been “standing at the foot of an incredibly, infinitely tall building.”³ Then he had a tactile experience of the bacteria: “It was first time that I felt materiality.”⁴ Intrigued by the microscopic scene of his own dream, he discussed the relatively new film technology, Cinemascope, at the end of the essay. Cinemascope used a widescreen, which he found suitable for a close-up shot, such as impassioned kissing on a large screen.⁵ He described the scene he had in mind: “Two enormous faces covering the screen. The fossilized movement of the enormous lips at the center of the screen. The pockmarked skin. The drama instantly would freeze as we look deep into our human nature, stripped of all vanity.”⁶ To aid in visualization, he also provided an illustration (Fig. 35) that shows outlines of lips in the center of a screen. Such a close-up view of human sexuality, Kawara confidently argued in the last sentence of the essay, would reveal “our human nature, stripped of all vanity.”⁷

Such a view of naked humanity is present in most of Kawara’s works from his days in Japan before 1959, the year he left the country. In his early works produced in Japan,

Kawara unfolded dream-like, claustrophobic views. His early drawings and paintings emblemize reawakening horrors and anxiety in post-occupation Japan, portraying cartoon-like characters in confined, rationalist spaces. In a country under chaos and in search of a new national identity after defeat in World War II, Kawara's figures and objects, truncated or mutilated, not only served to bring back the memory of suffering during the war but also reflect confusion and a sense of loss. Although his works make no explicit reference to Nagasaki and Hiroshima, they may evoke the aftermath of the atomic bombings in those two cities that happened when he was fifteen.

One of his earliest works, *Thinking Man* (1952) (Fig. 23), reflects Kawara's idea of the two aspects of love, or *eros* coexisting within man (what Plato advocated in his *Symposium*): love of the body and love of the rational. The subject of the work is loosely reminiscent of the well-known Auguste Rodin's sculpture, *The Thinker*, yet the formal language differs from the historical western sculpture: the painting depicts a portrait of a man in despair and disease filtered through young Kawara's eyes. This oil on canvas painting shows a tall, slender man who appears physically unhealthy and perhaps dysfunctional in a vertical, well-defined rectangular space. He is standing naked in an evidently solitary, windowless cell equipped only with a chamber pot in the corner. Dark red spots, possibly a sign of smallpox, cover the entire skeletal body. The figure is clearly an ill, chronically undernourished man whose chest and belly hardly show any sign of muscle. Yet his face and sexual organ are fairly well defined. The man poses as a melancholic by holding his right hand near his mouth with a clenched fist, as if all he had left were his ability to think.

Thinking Man is the young Kawara's self-portrait. Eager to learn about the human world yet frustrated with the horrific suffering of his countrymen after the war, Kawara created the psychological portrait of the period in his own terms, through an image of a man whose incessant pondering was perhaps the source of his fortitude and of a perseverance that let him survive the gloomy, chaotic, post-occupation Japan of the 1950s.⁸

Disease, infection, pockmarked skin, pregnant women, sexual oppression, and fungi are common motifs in Kawara's early paintings and drawings. The "theme of proliferation," as Yokoyama Tadashi calls it, comes to light both in the dreadful spreading of disease and in the endless multiplying of organic forms.⁹ Throughout his early works, such as *Thinking Man*, *Butcher's Wife* (Fig. 36), *Smallpox* (Fig. 39), and *The Bathroom* (1953-1954) (Figs. 10-18) series to the later *Death Masks* series (1955-56) (Figs. 37 and 38), Kawara persisted in his obsession with the decaying, contaminated human body. Among these works, *The Bathroom* series and the series *Events in the Warehouse* (1954) (Figs. 24-34), both of which consist of about thirty pencil drawings, particularly epitomize Kawara's Japanese period.¹⁰ In both series, he constructed a loose narrative of nightmarish murders and of self-multiplication. He composed a microcosmic world, in which human beings and objects existed in parallel and revealed their darkest sides in a "deformed space of Tokyo."¹¹ His works illustrate psychologically disturbing and cruel scenes, in which objects intimidate human beings or vice versa as if in a dream, a world of unconsciousness and illogic, containing emotional, horrific topics within rationalist grids, which worked as metaphor for his later conceptual works that employed multiple, serial, square canvases and postcards.

It was Takiguchi Shuzo (1903-1979) who first noted that the young Kawara “envisions dreadful dreams of proliferation within the confines of bleak concrete walls where one cannot conceive of any living thing emerging.”¹² Takiguchi once suggested that Kawara had constructed an “uncorrupted space,” a space of purity in, for example, a tiled bathroom in order to realize his obsession with excessiveness, evincing combination of “the innocent and the sick.”¹³ Critics like Miura Masashi (b.1946) focused on “tactile sensation” in Kawara’s works, a sensation that would convey the despair of this world and visions of mental illness.¹⁴

Precisely one year before writing about his dream, Kawara took part in an organized discussion for the journal *Bijutsu Hiho* (1952-1957), and expressed his feelings about the war and postwar periods: “[b]ecause I was exposed at an early age to the economic instability and social corruption of the immediate postwar era, I did not share the nostalgia that middle-aged cohorts had for the past. Instead, I was filled with a desperate desire to tear things apart.”¹⁵ Like the suffocating man in the small room in the *Thinking Man*, Kawara in 1955 was determined to utter his anger and frustration. The artists’ discussion, moderated by the emerging young art critic Hariu Ichiro (b.1925), was meant to explore issues surrounding figurative or realist art—such as what is reality and how to understand reality or materiality or matter, and how to deal with tradition—which prevailed in the discourse of the Japanese art world of the 1950s.¹⁶ Kawara, along with numerous other emerging artists, agreed upon the issue of the artist’s social responsibility and upon the role of art in a society that urgently needed transformation. He acknowledged the crisis of humanity and of human sensitivity: “[i]t is true that our reality

is so cruel and inhumane.”¹⁷ He considered that this broader crisis necessarily affected artistic creation in general.

After the war, the lack of basic needs for living, such as proper housing, often led to poverty and corruption, and anger and frustration. As a teenager during the Pacific War of the 1940s, Kawara came to realize that an individual life could be helplessly affected by the ups and downs of a nation-state. In the 1955 discussion, Kawara explained that he perceived material things or matter as inseparable from human beings: “Recently the notion of humanity has been threatened by matter. In daily life we feel anxiety and threat from overflowing increasing matter, which already exists not only in artistic life but also in our political and economic life.”¹⁸ Throughout the discussion, the twenty-two-year-old and ambitious Kawara spoke of the role of art in the uncontrollably disabled Japanese society.

It seems that the social and political realities of postwar Japan prompted Kawara to define his identity. The Japanese almost unanimously blamed the fascist government for the destruction of their nation. Like many other Japanese artists such as Okamoto Taro (1911-1996), Kawara felt Japan needed to transform, both for its own sake and for the rest of the world. He shared the prevailing sentiment that this quest for a new identity should begin with all pretenses being stripped away.¹⁹ The calm confrontation with human suffering and death in his art of this period was thus reactive to this need to annihilate all traces of the past and to gain insight and find perspectives for the future. Kawara’s own search for individual identity as an artist, inevitably, paralleled the postwar Japanese quest for national renewal.

Kawara was born in Aichi Prefecture of the Nagoya area on December 23, 1933 when the Japanese fascist government was gaining power.²⁰ Having a Christian father and a Buddhist mother and living near a Shinto shrine, Kawara was exposed early to diversity in ideas and belief systems.²¹ Upon graduation from Kariya High School, Kawara moved to Tokyo in 1951.²² With the support of his family, Kawara ventured into the lifestyle of a young artist in the capital city. Thirsty for knowledge of philosophy, history, and literature, Kawara spent much time in Kinokuniya, a large, historical bookstore in Shinjuku, Tokyo, reading the books and magazines he could not afford to buy. In the immediate postwar era, people who had suffered from the limited, controlled cultural policies of the fascists yearned for new knowledge and information. Some would sleep overnight in front of a bookstore awaiting a new publication, or stand reading all day in the bookstore. Around this time, Kawara made drawings and paintings in his studio without any formal guidance or art education. In his early known works such as *Thinking Man*, *Butcher's Wife*, and *Smallpox*, all made in 1952, single or multiple human figures are depicted in pain, frustrated, or affected with disease, thus anticipating his consistent focus throughout the 1950s, a theme of the suffering of humanity.²³

Many Japanese critics and art historians agree that Kawara's early works successfully embody postwar Japanese psychology. In 1958, Takiguchi called attention to Kawara's representations of nightmarish proliferation as revealing postwar Japanese sensibilities.²⁴ In Hariu's view, Kawara's early works captured disoriented human subjects in a machine-like state of self-alienation. Quoting Nakahara Yusuke's terms "closed room painting" or "locked room setting," Hariu found in Kawara's work a sense of isolation and fear that characterized post-war Japanese society.²⁵ Kawara, he wrote, took the

perspective not of a victim but of “an assailant” who fearlessly painted and drew human bodies cut into pieces yet desired to escape from the horrific enclosed circumstances.²⁶ While he alluded to the devastating physical and psychological results of the war, Kawara’s voice and vision was that of an angry man. In his essay, “At the Junction of Time and Space” (1991), Yokoyama claimed that Kawara’s works of the 1950s “testified to the realities of that era and, at the same time, offered predictions of a future that is the present.”²⁷ Chiba Shigeo argued that Kawara’s two series, *The Bathroom* and *Events in the Warehouse*, not only took the period’s solemn reality for content, but also showed that a new Japanese art could be born by combining the skills of modern western painting and the awareness of Japanese reality.²⁸ Kawara’s works have provided a model for a future mode of painting, i.e. dealing with contemporary Japanese content using western painting skills. This formulation was considered a step beyond the pre-war artists of the 1920s and 1930s who had sought to match the thematics, as well as the technical and stylistic sophistication of western painting.

Postwar Japan and Search for Identity

During the 1950s, Japan underwent rapid political swings. With the San Francisco Peace Treaty of May 1952, the Japanese government ended the U.S. Occupation and restored relations with forty-seven other countries (excepting the Soviet-block countries, India, Burma, and Yugoslavia). China had been swept by the Communist Revolution of 1949 and the pro-democracy Republic of China retreated to Taiwan. Communist North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, and the entire peninsula became a battleground between a democracy backed by the U.S. and a communist state supported by the

U.S.S.R. Japan was freed from Occupation in 1952 while the Korean War (1950-53) progressed, but U.S. forces stayed in Japan.

The outbreak of the Korean War in the last phase of the Occupation era reawakened the Japanese memories of World War II and forced them to accept the fact that war and peace remained unresolved in the Far East. Although efforts were being made to build the infrastructure for a new Japan, social and economic conditions were not much different from those of 1945 when Japan surrendered. War tribunals ended in 1948, but the U.S. presence continued to be felt in almost every sector from the new government to army stations. While the Japanese realized that it would take a long time to restore the economy, news of war changed the socio-political situation rapidly. War just across the sea and a possibility of invasion by North Korea alarmed people in Japan. Only five years after World War II, the peril of another war with North Korean Communists overtook a still poverty-stricken and traumatized Japan.

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945 moved Japan into an involuntary post-war journey toward reshaping the identity of the country. The defeat led to an unimaginable transition from a Japanese Empire that had relished more than forty years of colonial successes to the degree zero of complete devastation. Isozaki Arata, a renowned Japanese architect calls this time “the death of history,” or an end of the romantic colonialism of the Japanese empire.²⁹ Mixed feelings prevailed: people were anxious about the future of their country and at the same time relieved that the war was finally over.³⁰ It was the beginning of a long period of self-

reflection. As art critic Hariu put it, the postwar journey entailed “a complete reappraisal of Japan’s role as a modern state.”³¹

Immediately after the war, Japan had to erect a government directed by a foreign army for the first time in its history. Emperor Hirohito, once the most powerful ruler in Asia, looked small and defenseless while under the Occupation. He changed from navy uniforms to gray suits and allowed himself to be photographed standing right next to General Douglas MacArthur, who oversaw the country as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers until his abrupt removal by President Truman and his departure on April 16, 1951.³² Even the continuance of the imperial family and the Emperor’s own future were at risk. The horrors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the fast shift of governmental power during the Occupation numbed the Japanese, at least until they heard in 1950 that war had broken out in the Korean Peninsula, one of Japan’s former colonial territories.

What most devastated the Japanese, besides their humiliation and the collapse of their pride were the physical, human, and economic losses. Roughly 1.74 million military men, and 2.7 million servicemen and civilians combined, died during the war; and 4.5 million servicemen were wounded or ill by 1945. The total number of the casualties reached more than ten percent of the Japanese population of 74 million by 1941.³³ During the final years of the war, U.S. bombing destroyed one-quarter of the country’s wealth including four-fifths of its ships, one third of all industrial plants, and almost one quarter of all rolling stock and motor vehicles.³⁴ More than sixty major cities, in addition to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, had been heavily bombed and forty percent of these urban areas overall were ravaged. As a result, thirty percent of the population became homeless. In Tokyo, sixty five percent of all residences were destroyed. In Osaka and Nagoya, the

country's second and third largest cities, the figures reached fifty seven and eighty nine percent respectively.³⁵

At the center of the new reality was MacArthur who conducted war tribunals and implemented the policy of "demilitarization and democratization" in Japan. This new policy was supported by Japanese Communists whose labor movements had been frustrated during the war years, and by women who were first given the right to vote in 1946.³⁶ The U.S. encouraged Japan to maintain its administrative apparatus and retain the institution of the emperor to promote domestic stability. Capitalism was encouraged on a monopolistic base.³⁷ Fearing that his policy would fail without the help of the Emperor, MacArthur allowed Hirohito to keep his divine status. He publicly praised him as "the leader of the new democracy."³⁸ The tactic of using the imperial system symbolically worked to enhance MacArthur's own power and to earn respect from the Japanese.³⁹ It was contradictory, however, that MacArthur secretly pardoned the emperor's war crimes and at the same time strived to eradicate a collective feudalistic tendency in Japanese society.⁴⁰ More contradictory was the fact that MacArthur's government relied on the old Japanese bureaucracy to carry out its directives in the interests of practicality and efficiency.⁴¹ After the Americans departed, the bureaucracy would become stronger than it had been before and during the war.

MacArthur's strategic alliance with Communists in Japan helped shape the postwar topography of political ideologies. Since the 1920s, Japanese intellectuals had embraced socialist and communist ideas, and, before the 1940s, many were commonly accepted. Until China fell to Mao Zedong's Communists in 1949, the Occupation authorities encouraged communist and left wing parties to play an active part in implanting

democracy in Japanese politics.⁴² Communists and left-wing parties also welcomed the Occupation policies because their aim of reaching a broader range of people corresponded with the democracy advocated by the MacArthur government.⁴³ They began to organize trade unions with the hope that a truly democratic and socialist Japan would arise from the ruins of war.⁴⁴

After the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the Occupation government changed its policy and started to purge communists from politics. As the official Red Purge began in June 1950, the communist newspaper *Akahata* (Red Flag) was ordered to suspend publication and the liaison between the U.S. occupiers and the Japanese Left ended.⁴⁵ The new Cold War again drove the left into retreat, reminding the Japanese of the suppression of the 1930s. Meanwhile, communists and socialists were already dissatisfied with the Occupation government's pro-emperor policy and the advance of Americanism. Leftists who had envisioned a "pacifist utopia of popular solidarity" instead of a "country driven by materialism, conservatism, and selective historical amnesia" felt frustration and betrayal.⁴⁶ However, left-wing pacifists gained popular support and remained a factor in Japanese politics in part by forming a close connection with the right wing. The common denominator was "romantic nationalism" and antipathy toward the Americans.⁴⁷ While the new allies had some disagreements, such as over the imperial system, both sides shared resentment about being robbed by the U.S. occupiers.

Under the Occupation government's policy of democratizing Japan, any attempts to glorify the past, especially the pre-modern era, was censored out of fear that such moves would re-spark the fascist, nationalist propaganda that had exploited Japan's feudal history. Among the forbidden areas were samurai dramas and films, Kabuki plays, and

anthologies of medieval poetry. Even Mount Fuji, the ultimate symbol of Japan and the site of Shintoist nature worship, was not allowed in visual representations if there were signs of nationalist sentiments. *The Japanese Tragedy* (1946), a film by left-wing filmmaker Fumio Kamei, met with official censorship because it criticized the emperor's role during the war. Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida and General Charles Willoughby, after screening the film, banned it from public showing.⁴⁸ Under the Occupation government's version of democracy as the new ideology for Japan, the entire national cultural tradition had to be scrutinized and reviewed for its fitness to the newly-imposed political orientation.⁴⁹ The Occupation also prohibited discussions about World War II, and especially the details of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. In the immediate years after the war, only scientific texts were allowed to deal with the A-bomb subject. In 1949, a film project, *No More Hiroshima*, initiated by the city of Hiroshima, was canceled by the Occupation authorities. They objected to horrific yet realistic scenes of mass destruction.⁵⁰ In 1950, the title of a collaborative painting by Maruki Iri and Maruki Toshi had to be changed from *Atomic Bomb* to *August 6, 1945*.⁵¹ Censorship during the Occupation gave rise to anti-American perspectives in books and films about the A-bomb after the Occupation ended in 1952.⁵² For example, *Hiroshima* (1953), a film by Sekigawa Hideo, ends with a scene in which American tourists buy souvenir bones of the A-bomb victims.⁵³ *In the Stream of the Black River* (1969), a comic book pictures a female war survivor taking her revenge on Americans by turning herself into a prostitute and infecting GIs with syphilis before she dies.⁵⁴

Postwar Art and the Issue of Identity

Amidst the ruins of war, creative activities were on hold. Efforts to rebuild from “degree zero” or “point zero” implying a “complete break with the past” were not enough to produce new artistic movements.⁵⁵ The Japanese art world had already been purged by the fascist regime as Japan advanced its war with China in 1931. By the early 1940s, all cultural activities were under tight surveillance. The Japanese were forced to endure political and economic sacrifices in the name of the emperor and his empire and they were not allowed to appreciate new cultural trends unless the works invoked a nationalist idea of “Japaneseness.” As the war escalated until the very fate of the Japanese empire relied on its result, the militant government was intolerant of anything anti-nationalistic or challenging. The belief that Japan would be able to continue its rule over Asia was one of the last hopes of the weakening government.⁵⁶ By the time World War II was over, the art world was in a fragile condition and artists fell into confusion over the identity of postwar Japanese art.

Among the priorities of the postwar years was to find so called “war criminals,” who had promoted militarism or cooperated with the fascist government in the early 1940s. Artists were not officially included in this search although many had worked for the government voluntarily or involuntarily before and during the war. Leftist artists pressured the so-called “war artists” who had produced propagandistic paintings and sculptures. In almost all fields, fingers were pointed at the artists and writers who had actively served the war ideology.⁵⁷ The Japan Art Society (*Nihon Bijutsukai*), founded in April 1946, led in the search for individuals who had served the fascist regime.⁵⁸ In the name of rebuilding the art world on cleaner ground, the leftist Japan Art Society held war

artists such as Fujita Tsuguharu, Nakamura Kenichi, Miyamoto Saburo and Mukai Junkichi accountable for their cooperation with the fascist government. Unable to bear the persistent pressure from the Japan Art Society, Fujita finally left Japan for the U.S. in 1949 with the help of the Occupation government, and later settled in France. He became a citizen and lived there until his death.⁵⁹

The first three years of the 1950s saw rapid political and cultural transition. These years mark the borderline between the pre-war and postwar art worlds.⁶⁰ While the period between 1945 and 1950 had been categorized as a “zero degree” or “point zero” for a benumbed art world, the early 1950s saw the Japanese art systems gradually reshaping themselves. Exhibitions were held, magazines started, and the door was opened to European art unseen for over a decade. Major exhibitions were often sponsored by newspaper companies such as Yomiuri, Asahi, and Mainich, which had played a significant role in introducing and encouraging art inside and outside Japan before the war.⁶¹ Most prominent among the new magazines and periodicals in the 1950s were *Bijutsu Techo* (Art Note) (January 1948-present) and *Bijutsu Hihyo* (Art Criticism) (January 1952-February 1957).⁶² While *Bijutsu Techo* steadily established its fame as a general monthly art magazine, *Bijutsu Hihyo* provided a forum for debates and discussions by a young, post-war generation of critics such as Segi Shinichi, Hariu Ichiro, Yoshiaki Higashino, Nakahara Yusuke, Kimihide Tokudaiji, and Ehara Jun, as well as for established but internally exiled figures such as Takiguchi Shuzo, Uemura Takachiyo, and Egawa Kazuhiko. Newly-emerging young artists also contributed to *Bijutsu Hihyo*.⁶³

As the Occupation ended and international relations were restored in 1952, exhibitions of foreign artists and cultural exchanges with other countries became frequent, with many

sponsored by newspaper companies. In the 1940s, exhibitions often displayed low quality color reproductions of European masters. New original works by Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Rouault and Fernand Léger began to be seen in Japan in the 1950s.⁶⁴ In 1951, Japan sent forty five artists, including painters representing both Japanese and western styles, to the Sao Paolo Biennale for its first participation.⁶⁵ In 1952, Japan participated in the Venice Biennale for the first time, financed by Yomiuri newspapers.⁶⁶ In the same year, Japanese artists were invited to the Salon de Mai in Paris and exhibited works that clearly showed the influence of the postwar *École de Paris*.⁶⁷ Also in 1952, an International Art Exhibition of Japan was established by the Mainichi newspaper and began to introduce artists from the European and South American countries by category of nationality. In 1956, Japan built its own pavilion on the grounds of the Venice Biennale and participated in the first Guggenheim International in New York.⁶⁸

(Sur)Realism and Reportage Painting

In spite of MacArthur's rupture with the Communist Party in 1949, Japanese artists in the 1950s were influenced by leftist ideas. Disgust with authoritarian orthodoxy in Japanese society--the emperor system, social conformity, and the ethos of personal sacrifice—attracted young artists who sought a new direction in their art. They felt that a historical burden had been imposed upon them, “a burden of ‘realism’” which called them to confront their “insecurity and nervousness” in the face of the cruel reality of postwar life.⁶⁹ As conflict on the Korean Peninsula began, fear of another war put the issue of peace on the artistic agenda. Situations in Asia were rapidly changing as national ideologies were reconfigured around the poles of democracy and communism. One artist

described his perception of the time as follows: “There was also no peace in Japan,” recalled the artist Ikeda Tatsuo, “not the real content of peace but only the appearance of it.”⁷⁰ This collective concern was reflected in the “heiwa no tame no bijutsu ten (Art for Peace Exhibition)” held in the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art in June 1952, supervised by the Avant-Garde Art Society. In April of 1953, Osaka City held its own “heiwa wo mamoru bijutsu ten (Peace Keeping Art Exhibition)” in the City Art Museum and a second such exhibit in December.⁷¹ For the second exhibition, the title was changed to “heiwa bijutsu ten (Peace Art Exhibition),” and a show with that title would be held annually in both Tokyo and Osaka throughout the 1950s. These exhibitions grew larger every year as artists from other countries, such as Léger, sent their work.⁷²

Faced with an unstable socio-political situation, postwar art critics were often engaged in debating on realisms; how they would serve to restore a place for postwar art in between Japanese Socialist Realism and modernism, the two intellectual poles of the time. Hijikata Teiichi, a critic and art historian, initiated the debate, arguing that modern, western styles of painting of the pre-war era entailed a lack of consciousness or intellectualism on the part of artists, and argued for the need to recover a realist vision for postwar art.⁷³ While he denounced the academic attitude associated with 19th century realism, Hijikata introduced Courbet’s art as the preferred prototype of western style realism. Hayashi Fumio, on the other hand, advocated political, realist works as opposed to a Japanese modernist art that emphasized “individualism, autonomy and idea,” following the model set by the putatively decadent French art of the 19th century, namely Impressionism.⁷⁴ If realist critics such as Nagai Kiyoshi and Hongo Arata supported

Hayashi's position, modernists like Fukujawa Ichiro and Uemura Takachiyo explored a new realism that would not mutilate legacies of Surrealism and modernist painting.⁷⁵

In the midst of the polarized arguments on how to grasp the postwar reality, artists found realism valuable for describing their feelings and concerns. In fact, artists still remained affected by the cultural art policy of the fascist government, which had insisted that artists pursue figurative, realist language. The Communist Party also supported realist art, and art critics of the Party regularly denounced all art since Impressionism. This insistence on realism drove many artists out of the leftist Japan Art Society.⁷⁶ Faced with the two main issues of the time, "man and matter," artists felt the need to examine how the procedure of image-making was pertinent to humanity.⁷⁷ The call for social responsibility in art was not just directed at artists but also at critics, who often argued in favor of art's active engagement in society. Critics like Nakahara blatantly declared that the myth of artistic autonomy should be broken in order to awaken human consciousness.⁷⁸

By 1953, a new generation of realist artists had formed a loose network of artists' groups that allegedly hewed neither to hard-line communist ideals nor to conventional traditions of Japanese painting. Skeptical of Stalinist Socialist Realism, postwar artists such as Toneyama Kojin, Nakamura Hiroshi, and Yoshinaka Taizo found the subjective realism they discerned in Courbet inspirational for redefining Japanese artistic identity. They carried their views about the collapse of humanity onto canvases and paper in a sympathetic mode, whose realist overtones earned it the designation, "Reportage Painting" (Fig. 40).⁷⁹ Kawara began his artistic career in the midst of this new tendency with *The Bathroom* series, which was immediately embraced by critics as a kind of

mirror reflecting the mentality of the time.⁸⁰ The Reportage painters were directly influenced by leftist ideas then widespread in Japan. Like the Communist Party which sent its members to small villages and mountain towns where people had trouble with the authorities, the Reportage painters traveled to and bore witness in places where the local residents confronted the American army over issues like fishing or farming rights, or plans to build dams. These artists produced extensive, narrative, illustrational sketches based on their observations more or less as journalists would write reports.⁸¹ Their storytelling drawings and paintings, however, were soon perceived as an off-shoot of the doctrine of Socialist Realism. The didactic methods of orthodox left realism soon alienated postwar avant-garde artists who found abstract art more suitable for the fast-developing Japan in the international world.

Intertwined with the realist impulse that dominated Japanese art in the first half of the 1950s was a suppressed Surrealist tradition that had survived the war. Even as artists critiqued the social and cultural realities before them, they sought to open a path to the daunted psyche and its memories of the war. Surrealism, the last avant-garde art movement to emerge in pre-war Japan, was seen by many as holding the potential to resuscitate the avant-garde's energies.⁸² Since the western, liberal art movement had faced censorship by the fascist government, with Takiguchi arrested in 1941 on charges of introducing Communist ideas and subverting the morals of the young, the Japanese Surrealist movement had been dormant and its devotees had been in inner exile until the end of the war. Unlike the French wing of the movement, however, most pre-war Japanese Surrealists were not romantically driven by Communism. And unlike some of their French counterparts, postwar Japanese Surrealist artists were not welcomed by the

Japanese Communist Party. The intolerance of Socialist Realism for imagination and fantasy drove many young artists away from political ideology.

The experience of war changed the content of Japanese Surrealist art from private, psychological concerns to the social world after World War II. Postwar artists such as Yayoi Kusama, Abe Nobuya, and Furusawa Iwami attempted to infuse social messages into Surrealist painting.⁸³ For example, Furusawa's 1948 painting, *Song of Resilience* (*Hyou kyoku*) (Fig. 41) shows a devastated town loosely reminiscent of Hiroshima or Nagasaki after the atomic bombing. Grouped images hover over the town, swirling into the air where a broken cross and parts of body organs float. The collection of objects and bodies resembles a cemetery. The entire canvas is toned red, and even the half-moon is saturated with red.

A 1998 exhibition, "Sengo nihon no realism 1945-1960 (Realism in Postwar Japan 1945-1960), documented how postwar realism evolved out of Surrealism in Japan.⁸⁴ The exhibition was based on the premise that realism is not a style but a spirit or an attitude of the period. It wove a story of realist representation from the end of the war until *Art Informel* overtook the avant-garde art world in Japan in the late 1950s. The show started with a photograph of a white cloud taken twenty minutes after the atomic bombing, and ends with a series of photographs entitled *Atlas*, which memorialize dead soldiers and scars of the A-bomb victims. Included within the scope of the exhibition were post-war Surrealist paintings, Reportage Paintings, new realist paintings, semi-abstract paintings and photographs which captured the sociological and cultural atmosphere of postwar Japan.

The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 accelerated the turn already underway from Surrealism to realism. With growing skepticism of Surrealist visual languages, critics like Hariu turned to western artists such as Bernard Buffet and André Minaux, whose expressionistic technique and existential portrayal of humans were seen as inspirational.⁸⁵ Kawara, growing up with the Surrealist legacy, adopted its strategy of absurdity and quiet alienation, and expressed a human psyche filtered through memories of war, social injustice, and anxiety. While his work of the 1950s was realist to a degree, he was well aware of the risks of realism. To capture the devastated situation of his country, Kawara created his own formula combining an expressionist flair with a surrealist approach to his subjects. With his frequent use of a “closed room” setting in his work, a privately invested space (which I will discuss later in this chapter), Kawara attempted to show the impact on humans of the outside world. He used multiple focal points, dispersed in and out of the picture plane to create psychologically charged rooms in which humans and materials are set free from the laws of the external world. He once argued that although Surrealist treatments of space destabilized traditional pictorial “space as symmetry between the left and the right,” it failed to capture the chaos of the real world.⁸⁶ His off-balanced, asymmetrical spatial arrangements were geared to suggest more effective ways to represent pandemonium in a two-dimensional format.

“Nippon Ten”

The “*Nippon Ten*” (Japan Exhibition) charted the rise and fall of Reportage Painting. This thematic exhibition was held annually from June 1953 until July 1959 during the most tumultuous and dynamic period in Japanese postwar art history, and coincided with

Kawara's Japanese period.⁸⁷ Conceived by the *Zenei bijutsu kai* (Avant-Garde Art Society) (1947-) and members of the *Seinen bijutsuka rengo* (Young Artists' Federation) (1953-), the exhibition emerged as a forum for young artists to show art that would critique the status quo in Japan and to bring contemporary social situations to the attention of the art audience.⁸⁸ The title of the show, coined by painter Katsuragawa Hiroshi, implied a thorough analysis of the home country and a search for new representations for a new Japan. It embodied the ambitions of young artists who wanted to "make clear the picture of present Japan" through "the eyes of the artists."⁸⁹ The title was written not in *kanji*, a Chinese character system nor in *hirakana*, the quintessential Japanese character system, but in *katakana*, a Japanese character system that transposes foreign words into Japanese, for *katakana*'s function of introducing a new word imported from other cultures was ideal for inventing a new imagery of Japan stripped of wartime Japanese imagery and archaic Japanese conventions. As such, it was a deliberate declaration that this art differed from that of the older generation, and further that even the name of the homeland could not escape these artists' scrutiny. The exhibition series reflected the pervading enthusiasm for objectifying and analyze what postwar "Japan" meant to them.

The first "*Nippon Ten*" show was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tokyo in 1953.⁹⁰ Most of the works focused on social issues such as the protest against the extended presence of the U.S. army in Tachikawa, and the strong social comment in the works brought attention to the show.⁹¹ For the first "*Nippon Ten*" exhibit, Kawara submitted the first sixteen works of *The Bathroom* series which eventually totaled twenty eight works. *The Bathroom* series was immediately noticed by critics and fellow artists

including Ikeda Tatsuo, a fellow committee member and participant in the show. Having then detected what he perceived as Kawara's conspicuously "non-Japanese" quality, Ikeda later praised Kawara's work as: "grotesque, unconventional as Japanese, morbid, cruel, and dry."⁹² It was not just Kawara's uncommon sensitivity that surprised Ikeda. More surprising to Ikeda was the fact that Kawara was only twenty years old, four-years younger than he. Ikeda found Kawara quiet and taciturn yet smart, insightful and sharp. His friendship with Kawara continued through various group activities until Kawara left Japan in 1959.⁹³ Ikeda's respect for Kawara is well shown in his drawing *Child Genius (Shindo)* (1956) (Fig. 42), which has been known to be modeled after Kawara.⁹⁴

Kawara also used *katakana* to sign his drawings, as in the title of the "Nippon Ten." This later became a norm for his signature during his Japanese period, although he went back-and-forth between Japanese and western name orderings. Writing his name in *katakana* signaled his youthful ambition to construct his own artistic identity, and the antipathy he shared with the other "Nippon Ten" artists for the old rules. Although not entirely new, his choice of signature not only represented his aspiration by evoking the aura associated with foreign artists' names as written in *katakana*, such as Picasso or Matisse, but also revealed an anti-institutional inclination by refusing the conventions of Japanese name writing.⁹⁵ Kawara continued to contribute to all the "Nippon Ten" exhibitions that were held annually.

The critical response to the "Nippon Ten" shows was not enthusiastic about these heavily thematic paintings. The first exhibition, Hariu wrote, was reflective of a "contemporary Japanese crisis" and showed young artists' confusion over the role of realism. The paintings' lack of plastic sophistication left the critic "unsatisfied."⁹⁶ As an

example, he pointed to the “powerful” yet “propagandistic” and “typically surrealistic” aspects found in works by Katsuragawa Hiroshi; to the “easy technique” and “melodrama-like” quality in Yamashita Kikuji’s *Story of Akebono Village* (Fig. 40); and to the “primitive” style of Ikeda Tatsuo’s *Tachikawa Landscape*.⁹⁷ This skepticism toward Reportage Painting continued in Tono Yoshiaki’s review of the 1954 “Nippon Ten.” He criticized the limits of didactic realism:

[i]t is difficult to see why these artists do not understand that contemporary subject matter does not have to derive from their text book understanding of the problems of our society or from a sense of pity for the underprivileged. Why don’t they see that the spirit of our time can be expressed even by a flower?⁹⁸

Tono then diagnosed that the Reportage painters’ literal transposition of subject into painting showed a lack of imagination. In Tono’s review of the 1955 *Nippon Ten*, he wrote that most of the participating artists, except Kawara, turned into victims of their own consciousness, making dark and narrative-oriented canvases. However, Kawara’s repetitious use of gravity-breaking space, Tono warned, had a danger of becoming “mannerist.”⁹⁹

Tono’s 1957 criticism of Kawara’s works as the products of a “closed imagination” that only allowed “numerous maggots” and dancing body parts into the “warped space” further extended his long-held skepticism of Reportage Painting.¹⁰⁰ Pointing to Kawara’s works made in 1956, such as *Absentees*, *Golden Home*, *Untitled*, *Stones Thrown*, the critic charged that Kawara’s experiments in depicting social injustices or abnormalities went too far, destroying his own achievements in the earlier *The Bathroom* series.¹⁰¹ Thus it seemed natural for the critic to advocate both Neo Dada in the U.S. and Neo-Dada Organizers later in Japan in the early 1960s, movements I will discuss further in Chapter Two.

Reportage painters' lack of subtlety or ambiguity in addressing social problems alienated not only critics but also the artists of the next generation. In the meantime, Japanese art in the late 1950s was moving in a new direction. The reawakened spirit of an experimental avant-garde gradually dominated major art scenes and provided multiple alternatives to realist art. Provoked by western avant-garde art, especially European *Art Informel* and American Neo-Dada, artists of the "third generation of postwar Japanese avant-gardes," as Alexandra Munroe called them, began to emerge in the 1957 Yomiuri Independent Exhibition.¹⁰² Reportage Painting by then seemed monotonous and even didactic, failing to attract newly emerging artists. Subject-oriented realism did not seem to offer an effective way to capture the artistic spirit of the new decade.

These attempts to diminish or supercede political realism contributed to later historians' undervaluing of Reportage Painting in their treatments of major avant-gardes after 1945. Reportage Painting has often been overshadowed by the fame of the Gutai group (1954-1972), generally known in the west as the first systematic post-war Japanese avant-garde. Appearing almost simultaneously with Reportage Painting, the Gutai group was a small, exclusive group, centered in the western Kansai region. The group did not gain much critical attention or a wide following from the Japanese art world in the 1950s, mainly due to the fact that the general intellectual tendency in Tokyo leaned toward the left, and a modernist thread of Okamoto and others dominated in Tokyo.¹⁰³ Reportage Painting, by contrast, was at the center of the Tokyo art world and attracted many artists' and critics' attention. The artists of the Gutai group were indifferent to figurative approaches to social subjects and ignorant of leftism, which made it difficult for the

Japanese at the time to appreciate Gutai, while Reportage artists saw Gutai performances as “mere bourgeois spectacle, no more serious or responsible than child’s play.”¹⁰⁴

The contrast of fame in these two art movements was evident in a recent internationally traveled survey exhibition, “Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky” (1994-95), which excluded Reportage Painting from a list of avant-gardes compiled for a western audience both in the show and in the accompanying catalogue.¹⁰⁵ The exhibition told the story of contemporary Japanese art from the Gutai group’s 1955 outdoor performances to Yasumasa Morimura’s 1990s photographs of himself disguised as, among others, Marcel Duchamp or Michael Jackson. The curator, Munroe, argued that she had attempted to seize “the Japanese avant-garde as an integral force within the social, political, and intellectual histories” of postwar Japan.¹⁰⁶ In the story of that avant-garde as she told it, the strong presence of realism during the postwar era was ignored. Munroe selected only artists who worked independently of official art salons, such as the *nitten* (Japan Art Exhibition) or the arts associations or *dantai*, such as *nika-kai* (Second Section Association). These, she wrote, inherited “Japan’s early modern critical legacy,” challenging the conservative and hierarchical art establishment (*gadan*) of the Meiji period by employing individualist, western avant-garde art ideas.¹⁰⁷

Munroe’s exhibition reprised the common framework of examining how Japanese avant-garde art digested European and American examples to formulate its own individual expressions. In neglecting Reportage Painting, such earlier exhibitions as, “Reconstructions: Avant-garde Art in Japan 1945-1965” (1985), and “Japon des avant-gardes 1910-1970” (1986) were not much different.¹⁰⁸ While the “Reconstructions” show traced a trajectory from prewar avant-garde movements such as Surrealism to postwar

Surrealism and the Hi-Red Center, “Japon des avant-gardes 1910-1970” included works from the 1970s, a period of rapid economic expansion in Japan. In the narratives of both exhibitions, postwar Japanese realism is missing or spotlighted only as a background element despite its prominent presence between 1952 and 1957.¹⁰⁹

Producers’ Discussion Group

After his success in the first “*Nippon Ten*,” Kawara continued to associate with artists who had demonstrated their views of the artist’s social responsibility by joining progressive art associations that advocated realism. He joined Demokrato Artists’ Association (1951-1957) in 1953 and exhibited in its annual shows in Tokyo in 1953 and 1954.¹¹⁰ He also found opportunities to show his works almost every year.¹¹¹ He had a solo show of twenty works from *The Bathroom* series at Takemiya Gallery in February 1954, under the curatorship of Takiguchi. In December of the same year, he exhibited another significant series, *Events in a Warehouse* at the Hibiya Gallery. He also participated in group shows organized by the Art Club (1953-1970) at Sato Gallery, Ginza in 1955. The Sato Gallery, which had just opened, mounted ambitious shows for young artists and published *The Monthly Magazine of Sato Gallery*.¹¹² Kawara’s work, *Composition* (1956), was shown in the historical “Exposition Internationale de l’Art Actuel” in November 1956, which presented both Japanese and foreign artists together in an attempt to promote international art in Japan.¹¹³

In April 1955, Kawara, along with Ikeda and others, founded the *Seisakusha-kondankai* (Producers’ Discussion Group), an artists’ association that pursued new realism as their mission beyond the conflict between Socialist Realism and

Modernism.¹¹⁴ Probably modeled after the interdisciplinary *Gendai Bijutsu Kondankai* (Contemporary Art Discussion Group), which birthed the Gutai group, Producers' Discussion Group gathered artists from diverse genres such as painting, literature, film, theater, criticism. Each artist searched for and aimed to develop the "method of new realism" (according to their statement).¹¹⁵ Among the members were artists (Yoshikuni Iida, Ikeda Tatsuo, Ishii Shigeo, Shimamura Kiyoshi, On Kawara), writers, filmmakers (Kumaya Mitsunori), and theater figures (Tahata Nobuyoshi).¹¹⁶ Although there were frequent changes in its membership, when the group was at its peak, it had almost twenty members. The group also published its own magazine, *Realism*, from May 1955, for which Kawara published several essays.¹¹⁷ Exchanging ideas with artists from other genres, Kawara expanded his concept of art and actively participated in exhibitions and discussions. In the Producers' Discussion Group, Kawara, along with filmmakers and playwrights, discussed and practiced the social responsibilities of artists in a more systematic way. The frequent meetings with the other members led him to explore ways of fusing the creativity of artists working in different genres. At the same time, Kawara began to polish his theory of art and communication, a foundation of his later work. As a founding member, he realized early on the need to reach the public in urban or rural areas that had limited access to galleries and museums. To pursue more direct contact with the public, members intentionally chose venues for their exhibitions beyond Tokyo in regional cities such as Kokura (November 4-10, 1955), Shibata (January 1956), Hankyu (October 9-14, 1956), and Toyama (August 21-31, 1957). During the exhibitions, the artists would stay in the gallery and explain their intentions to the public. They also made statements in exhibition catalogues and lectured in attempts to connect with a wider

audience.¹¹⁸ The members worked on many cooperative projects conceived through intensive study group meetings aimed at self-education.

Kawara shared this emphasis on realism and publicly argued that a figurative artist should reflect social reality in his/her work. In a discussion held while he was active in the Producers' Discussion Group, Kawara contended that the figurative artist should pick up an idea from the society and be conscious of social functions when he/she creates art.¹¹⁹ For him, art was not segregated from life. He believed that if art remained in an isolated field in the name of pure autonomy, art would not be able to grasp reality as a whole and would fail to express the mentality of people.¹²⁰ The figurative artist would not need to sacrifice freedom when his or her art addresses social concerns, Kawara observed, explaining in a somewhat idealistic tone that an artist could achieve individuality without sacrificing a commitment to reality.¹²¹ For him, therefore, an artist, in spite of the subjectivity involved in his cognitive process, was not someone who just remained within an individual world.¹²²

Narrative and Seriality

During his Japanese period, Kawara used the format of serial pencil drawings. The materials were cheap and appealing for the young artist. As befitted his growing reputation as an exemplary artist of the new realism, he often relied on descriptive scenes. Whether in drawings or paintings, his work transposed a fragment of the visual world onto paper or canvas, often assembled into series.¹²³ Three of Kawara's works, *The Bathroom*, *Events in a Warehouse*, and *Death Mask*, employ a serial format to describe the mentality or "phenomena" that Kawara observed in Japanese minds.¹²⁴ By

sequentially arranging the different moments of each incident (Figs. 10-18, 24-34, and 37-38) as if to prefigure his later obsession with time and date, the serial format builds up multiple ways for the viewer to connect with indirect yet poignant portrayals of human psychology placed under physical, material threat. The scenes progress gradually from the beginning toward the end, from more realistic figuration to more abstracted images. Kawara's use of the serial format anticipated his later theories and works, from the critique of the idea of paintings as unique to his "*insatsu kaiga* (printed painting)" projects (Figs. 19-21), and from his date paintings series to journals and mail series such as *I Read, I Went, I Met, I Got Up At, and I Am Still Alive*.¹²⁵ This pattern of working serially on a daily or consistent basis seems to persist throughout his career beyond Japanese period, a phenomenon I will discuss further in Chapter Five.

Kawara's early works invite viewers to construct a story which does not necessarily form a neat, coherent plot, while moving from one drawing to another. Kawara's narrative in *The Bathroom* (Figs. 10-18), for example, forms a theme of ruthless murder over twenty eight scenes, beginning with a few humans in a bathroom and ending with the complete dismantling of body parts. The sense of time, in moving from one scene to another, resembles a film script or a play. The cartoon-like qualities of the stylized figures evoke mechanized human beings. The last four drawings of *The Bathroom* series (Figs. 15-18) evince a destruction of human morality and hope by omitting most of traces of figures or objects. Things and people are fragmented and piled up as if in a garbage dump. This narrative quality of his early work is anticipatory of his later autobiographical works.¹²⁶

Kawara's drawings seem to inherit the narrative impulses inherent in traditional Japanese art. Most scroll ink paintings from the pre-modern era depict scene after scene in a long, flat, horizontal continuum, so the spectator could see the scroll as a piece of drama as it unrolls.¹²⁷ He once distinguished uncovering a spiritual heritage in traditional art from following traditional styles, and suggested that the "irrational" aspect in Japanese art might provide an element to counteract an oppressive reality.¹²⁸ While he avoided siding with anti-rationalists at other times, he argued that irrationality in Japanese art can be "a weapon to change our reality."¹²⁹ Kawara's narratives of the 1950s, however, do not conform to traditional formats or techniques. Each scene is formed separately from the next so that the spectator can focus on each setting: Each scene can be shown independently or in a group. While traditional hand scrolls are rolled out to show the entire painting, Kawara's should be turned over singly to make a story line since they are not intended to be bound as one drawing book.¹³⁰ Kawara is highly conscious of the spectator in setting each scene. Multiple, unconventional perspectives in his drawings destabilize the space, and the figures in *The Bathroom* have no substantial connection to the setting of a bathroom.¹³¹

Kawara's obsessive use of the body in his work follows the tradition of "body (*nikutai*) painting (*kaiga*)" found in works by artists such as Furusawa Iwami, Fukuzawa Ichiro, and Abe Nobuya, who all opted for depicting postwar suffering and horror through the body.¹³² Parallel with efforts to rebuild Japanese identity as discussed above, their concentration on the body resonated with the mainstream art world in Tokyo. *Nikutai* painters deformed, distorted, and created disturbing images of human beings, mostly influenced by a surrealist impulse and combined with relics of modernist styles

such as expressionistic Fauvism. Kawara extended themes such as self-torture and masochism to explore a more extreme view of the human body, with a lesser degree of expressionism but with a more tactile quality.¹³³

If some postwar Japanese artists were compelled to pay attention to the suffering “body,” postwar Japanese writers were occupied with the impulse to depict that same body or *nikutai*. Kawara’s determination to portray human suffering under man-made absurdities was parallel with that of certain Japanese writers who dealt with similar subjects in novels and short stories. Kawara’s favorite subjects of murder or other crimes both unlawful and immoral frequently appeared not only in newspaper headlines but also in novels and films in the 1940s and 1950s. Postwar cultural production in Japan was dominated by themes of war and the sense of loss. If postwar Germany cultivated *Trummerliteratur* (literature of the ruins), the Japanese gave birth to the *yakeato seidai* (burnt-out generation), writers who emerged in the ruins of the war.¹³⁴ A crisis of identity, both national and individual, pervaded the defeated Japan, and nihilism spread. Writers who had had direct experience of the war while in the army and those who had stayed in Japan felt the urge to spill out frustration, desire and a long-absent sense of selfhood.

A literary counterpart to *nikutai* painting is evident in the novel, *The Gate of Flesh* (*Nikutai no Mon*) (1947) by Tamura Taijiro (b.1911), in which he described *nikutai*, or the flesh of human bodies, as a valuable commodity among the most disadvantaged people after the war, who came to realize its significance for survival by feeling hungry and by escaping hunger by selling their flesh.¹³⁵ Tamura’s concept of *nikutai* stands in ironic opposition to *kokutai*, or “national entity,” the body of the nation that the Japanese

were required to revere above all. In fact, *kokutai* had frequently appeared in the motto of the country since the mid-1920s, signifying “the supreme object of veneration.” The concept was successfully maneuvered to compel the people of Japan to undergo the emperor system and fascist control in the name of unity. Tamura reveals the consequences of the unconditional worship of the “national entity” by contrasting the lives of street people with the *kokutai* that ultimately drove them to defeat and poverty.¹³⁶ *The Gate of Flesh* was popular enough to be made into a play and, later a movie. The book led people to recognize that overemphasizing the nation state endangers the individual, and that the individuality of each person is more important than ideological control of *kokutai*.¹³⁷

The emptying out of all the residue from the war period in art preceded the postwar quest for new identity, a quest that pervaded most postwar Japanese art and literature.¹³⁸ Writers such as Ooka Shohei (b.1909) had seen cannibalistic massacres and brutal tortures in battlefields and colonies in the Philippines and other Asian regions, poured their guilt and horror into their postwar novels. For them, war was the matrix that generated the cannibalism--as an “emblematic projection of the darkness of man’s mind, of all that resists the civilizing conventions of society,” cannibalism epitomizes the cruelest face of the war.¹³⁹ The narrator, Private Tamura, in Ooka’s *Fires on the Plain* (*Nobi*) (1951), vividly describes how starved Japanese soldiers, trapped in the mountains of Luzon, ended up devouring the bodies of their enemies, justifying their acts by calling the natives “black pigs,” and Americans “white pigs.”¹⁴⁰ The soldiers cannibalize each other when there are no more enemies to eat. Both in reality and in his dreams, Private Tamura encounters images of death; “Everywhere I saw bodies.”¹⁴¹ He describes the

“deathscape” surrounding him: “Their vivid guts and blood shone in the sun’s rainwashed beams, while on the grass their severed legs and arms looked like the remains of so many broken dolls. Only the flies were moving.”¹⁴²

Some of Kawara’s works evoke the cannibalism or deathscapes of the postwar novelists. His *Smallpox* (1952) (Fig. 39) shows a Picassoesque massacre in a large room. As one of the Picasso protégés who admired and adopted the Spanish artist’s famous *Guernica* (1937), Kawara scattered stylized figures all over the space, either screaming, or observing and accepting the brutal moment.¹⁴³ The room is filled with the doom of disease and death. Mixed among everyday utensils—furniture, knives, bottles, boxes and containers—are the heads and torsos of the already massacred. The offenders and the victims are also muddled up; some of the several hands still hold knives. Both the floor and the ceiling support piles of bodies, as if two kinds of gravity are at work in the room. Inverting the drawing would not make much difference. All of the bodies are infected with the formidable disease of the title, *Smallpox*, their skin covered with extensive black dots. In the middle of the room, there is a small platform on which an androgynous limbless torso is laid out. At first glance, all the figures, alive or dead, look female, judging from their visible breasts. Closer inspection reveals that they are bisexual, suggesting that the majority of them are capable of reproduction. In fact, a pregnant woman (she does not show any male sex organ) is standing in the center of the room staring out at the viewer.

In *Dump* (1954) (Fig. 43), two massive piles of human bodies cover the surface of the entire land. Again the bodies are piled up, and many are torsos. *Dump* is a deathscape, in which some humans, caught between two killing fields, float hopelessly while others,

already massacred, fall down from the top right corner. The figures are schematized, reminiscent of Fernand Léger's mechanized human bodies (Fig. 46). His other works such as *The Bathroom* series (1953-54), *Come on...My House* (1955) (Fig. 44) and *Birth of the Illegitimate Child* (1955) (Fig. 45) turn the focus to secretive and thus more violent killing in private, domestic arenas. *Come on...My House* affords a detailed view of the deathscape seen in *Dump*, but the figures are engaged in more specific acts. *Come on...My House* shows humans who have lost their motivation to live as humans; all of them are dead physically or spiritually. Amongst food and mechanical instruments, they are fighting for survival. Not realizing that they are family members, as the title indicates, they attack each other, devoid of basic respect and a sense of responsibility. While a child is crying for food in the lower right corner, angry mothers are yelling at each other over a bottle of milk. Male adults are either engaged in heartless killing or are in a state of incapacity; one man is standing merely observing the scenes while another man is lifting a knife to kill a fellow man. To emphasize their state of complete inhumanity, all the figures and objects are painted in dark grays and schematized as mechanically as those in Léger's work, an artist Kawara revered.¹⁴⁴

What Kawara shared with writers of the time was a focus on the merciless shifts and changes they believed would define the foundation of the future society. Facing the aftermath of the sudden abolition of old reference systems, they accepted the fact that physical bodies were the source of their existence and transformation, the center of emotions like despair and sorrow, and the site of desires such as sex and hunger. Kawara, strikingly similar to his contemporary novelists, employed a narrative format to illustrate how the plausible real world and the painful, unimaginable dreamworld intersect. I find

this similarity supportive of my argument that Kawara's work of the 50s reflects the zeitgeist of the time, which distrusted the pretense to be "normal" and a love of the deformed, distorted and destroyed.

Kawara's use of a serial format is also similar to a literary trend in which short stories and novels were first published in serial form in journals or newspapers. Between 1954 and 1956, newspapers serialized almost two hundred novels.¹⁴⁵ Since then, serializing fiction has become the primary mode of publishing in Japan.¹⁴⁶ After the war, popular audiences were largely unable to buy expensive books. They relied on newspapers for information, knowledge and entertainment. Japanese newspapers began to carry daily fragments of stories with illustrations (Fig. 47), for which writers and artists would team up in collaboration. They found that they could work consistently and routinely under a specific work plan. In the process, narrative flow often underwent halts and new beginnings. Writers enjoyed dealing with the narrative flow or tension between passages to push the story, which would often leap from one episode to another.¹⁴⁷

Closed Rooms

The idiosyncratic spatial arrangements Kawara favored in his works serve to imprison human spirits and engulf human bodies. These include small cell-like rooms as in *Thinking Man*; murderous bathrooms, as in *The Bathroom* series; the workspace in *Butcher's Wife*; a large theater of death in *Smallpox*; and the storage space in the *Events in a Warehouse* series. Kawara often employed interior settings, a room-like arena, for his despairing anxious figures. The rooms lack windows or any connection to the outside world. Within the confined spaces, human beings are unprotected from horrible murder,

being truncated. The extreme expression of “abnormality” might be, as Hariu noted in 1955, the other face of the artist’s hope of “recovery of healthy and pure humanity.”¹⁴⁸

The distinctive quality of the space in Kawara’s works earned them the title “closed room” or “locked room” paintings. In 1956, critic Nakahara gave the name to works by Kawara, Ikeda and others, pointing to “edged figures, eccentric forms, dissolution of colors, drowned bodies, strange mass, fragmented bodies” that commonly appear in the artists’ works.¹⁴⁹ Nakahara later elaborated that the space usually has, as is evident in Kawara’s bathrooms, a diagonal composition and little distinction among the wall, floor and ceiling.¹⁵⁰ “Closed room” paintings, he wrote, revealed a state of social crisis in which “the society and politics were assailants, and humans, victims.”¹⁵¹ In this later essay, he confirmed that Kawara was the first painter who used the “closed room” concept, although several artists, especially those of whom were also members of the Producers’ Discussion Group, pursued the visual device.¹⁵²

In fact, before Nakahara’s generic use of the term, Hariu noticed the “closed” space that frequently appeared in Kawara’s work. Hariu wrote in a 1955 review that “unemotional figures” are scattered in a “strange, closed room.”¹⁵³ Thus, Nakahara’s term was little more than an elaboration of a recognized characteristic. After Nakahara’s essay, Takiguchi in 1958 observed that Kawara’s gruesome rooms had a “strange phosphorescent and uncorrupted” quality that combined unreal accidents seen through the eyes of an innocent yet angry observer.¹⁵⁴ Although Kawara never accepted or used the term, critics continued to characterize his work with the phrase. Later publications on contemporary Japanese art asserted that Kawara’s “locked room” paintings reflected the psychology of the 1950s. Hariu’s 1979 book on postwar Japanese art discussed Kawara’s

interior settings as the quintessential psychological arena of the postwar Japanese people, one pervaded by the sense of isolation and fear.¹⁵⁵ In the closed room setting, Hariu wrote, Kawara allowed murders out of a desperate notion that humans might have a better chance of surviving the distressing world as fragments. Chiba shared Hariu's view and used the term, "closed room," in his book, *Deviations in Contemporary Art 1945-1985* (1986).¹⁵⁶

The perspective in Kawara's "closed room" works went through several phases of development. Most of his works made in 1952, from *Thinking Man* (Fig. 23) to *Smallpox* (Fig. 39), frame the space in one point linear perspective. Three walls confine a single standing figure in a small room in both *Thinking Man* and *Butcher's Wife* (Fig. 36), as if the space exists solely for the figures. It is not a functional space for the man to sleep or for the woman to do daily work; rather it is a symbolic, even secretive space that suggests that the psyche of the subjects is in crisis. In *Smallpox* (Fig. 39), multiple figures occupy a large, cell-like space in which the ceiling, floor and three walls are exposed. A chaotic mix of human bodies, screaming or already dead, is spread all over so it is difficult even to distinguish the ceiling from the floor. Amidst the debris of bare human parts and objects, a pregnant woman stands naked in the center. Her gaze meets the viewer, commanding attention. Even more emotionally charged space is found in his two works entitled *Pregnant Woman* (a 1953 sketch and a 1954 oil painting) (Figs. 48 and 49), both of which show an identical bathroom upside down and slanted to the right within a square frame. Dead and live figures and objects are scattered in the diagonal room as if the law of gravity has failed.

His two drawing series of these years show deconstructed space, which is often distorted or deformed away from traditional one point perspective and the rectangular frame.¹⁵⁷ In the twenty-eight drawings of *The Bathroom*, Kawara uses several meticulously calculated focal points on polygonally shaped paper. From the first to the fifth drawing and in some drawings later in the series (Figs. 10-18), the bathroom maintains a rectangular, cubic shape. However, the space is upsetting, shaky, and destabilized. The room turns slightly unbalanced; tile patterns are stretched or reduced in scale to create a dizzy feeling. To make it more disturbing, Kawara sets the scene on a slanted angle, and uses polygonal frames. The female protagonist's anxiety, loss of morality, anger, sense of guilt, and worry about the future is successfully conveyed.¹⁵⁸

The change from regularity to irregularity gradually proceeded throughout the 1950s.¹⁵⁹ In the early drawing series, Kawara meticulously designed his spaces. He concluded that the real world before him did not invite "communication through symmetrical forms."¹⁶⁰ The world, he wrote, was full of "such a huge materialistic energy and contradictory social mechanisms" that it ripped human beings apart.¹⁶¹ Single point perspective was too simple to capture the essence of multi dimensions. The manifold perspectives and distortion of the spaces that Kawara discovered helped him capture the complexities in the real world. He perceived that intensity of form was significantly augmented and made more complex by "the fierce interaction...among multiple focuses," which should not necessarily be confined within the canvas.¹⁶² The "closed room" was thus an experimental laboratory in which Kawara practiced his theory of multiple perspectives to depict emotionally disabled human beings. Kawara's bold use of space

surprised many people in the 1950s, who often praised his art as unique and “non-Japanese.”¹⁶³

Kawara’s contemporary, the novelist Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), wrote a story, “Locked Room,” in 1950 that is reminiscent of Kawara’s “closed room” drawings (although whether or not Kawara was aware of this short story is unknown).¹⁶⁴ The story describes violent sexual fantasies and frustrations that occur in and around a room, the key to which is always controlled by women—a scene echoed in Kawara’s drawings. Mishima’s protagonist, Kodama Kazuo, works for the Finance Ministry immediately after the war. Kodama is uninterested in almost everything, with the typical loss of affect of an individual after the national disaster. Neither the economic crisis nor the unstable political situation catches his attention. Although he is right in the middle of all the “chaos and corruption” after the war, Kazuo distances himself from his surroundings, taking pride in being a solitary individual with no ties to anyone, dwelling within his “inner disorder.”¹⁶⁵ He is more interested in sex than in saving an ailing society. He meets and begins an affair with Kiriko, a married woman, who invites him to the “locked room” when her husband is at home. The room has been a scene of Kiriko’s sexual adventures with many other young men. One day, she dies of a heart attack after making love with Kodama in the room. Kodama flees the room but cannot resist the urge to return. When he does, he finds a maid and Kiriko’s nine-year-old daughter, the new owner of the key to the room.

The locked room is a space only women control. It provides a shelter for them from the outer world, the world of husbands and fathers. At the same time, the room should be locked, segregated from the external world to function as a safe haven. The room, the site

of adulterous sex, opens up oppressed desire, negating or confronting the order of society. It is a space of rebellion for women to refuse external impositions and to activate their passion.¹⁶⁶ In the room, men remain guests from the orderly world of law, and are never given the right to initiate sexual ritual, a ritual of stripping all pretenses and letting the human nature take control of the body. The male invitee feels threatened yet captivated by the women who own the space that operates under the law of their impulse.¹⁶⁷ The men are nevertheless the catalyst for the room to function fully. They are the reason women need the room of their own.

In Kawara's work, heavily psychological space parallels the external world, where the figures cannot pour out their feelings as they do in the "closed room." The central figures in the bloody murder scenes are women. The bathroom or confined room provides, as Kiriko's room does in Mishima's novel, a shelter for the scarred and distressed in which they pour forth their bottomless anguish and rage. All the figures are undressed, for clothes are signifiers of their social life. In the bathroom, women and men do not have to follow the rules of the external world. Here, impulses and desires reign. Kawara's realism evolves into a territory that blurs the borderline of consciousness and unconsciousness.¹⁶⁸ Yet the room is also a site where Kawara dreams of a dialectical result by combining the orderly and the chaotic, the rational and the unimaginable, and the oppressive and the oppressed.

If *The Bathroom* series shows literal pain and emotional distress, the thirty one drawings of the *Events in a Warehouse* series (Figs. 24-34) depict their subjects metaphorically.¹⁶⁹ Kawara depicts a microcosmic world of mechanical objects in the warehouse, varying from common, little noticed things like bowls, boxes, bottles, and a

shelf to unidentifiable, heavy machines. As if alive, the objects form a group, float like a cloud, transform their shapes, expand like a spider web, organize themselves in threatening ways, and destroy their own structure. In comparison with the earlier series, *Events in a Warehouse* approaches the chaotic yet organic existence of the objects in a more minute way. As in the bathroom, gravity here often does not work: objects soar and move freely. The only human figure, a woman, stands in the corner holding a light bulb in her right hand and an envelope in her left. Like the figure in *The Bathroom*, she is nude but this woman's body does not show scars or any signs of disease. She calmly stands observing the lively movement of the metal objects as if she is the host of the event.

The three subtitles hint at the subject of the work. Kawara divided the series into three parts: "Anxiety," "Noise," and "Rhythm."¹⁷⁰ Each part shows distinct characteristics. The first section, "Anxiety," consists of seven drawings. It begins with a scene of a room free of humans and full of fairly recognizable objects such as chairs, knives, dustpans, bottles, boxes and tables. The objects are floating in the left side of the room. A window is open, either on to the outside or the next room. Three ambiguously rendered cube-like structures are seen outside; they look like houses in a neighborhood. Some of the objects suggest traces of a person who might have left the room a while ago: a carpet, a bottle of liquor, and a bowl on the wooden floor. From the second drawing to the seventh, the floating objects move within the room as if they have their own ferocious life force. Part two, "Noise," includes drawings from number eight to twenty three. Metal poles and sticks form web-like structures and continue to expand. They entangle or disintegrate like vines in a jungle until they cannot make further branches. No single objects are discernible. The movement of the structure is often tempestuous as if accompanied by

cacophonous noise. Eight drawings, from numbers twenty four to thirty one, belong to part three, “Rhythm.” While objects from everyday life occupy the room of part one, and long or short thin pipes the space of part two, unidentifiable weapon-like, heavy metal objects parade rhythmically in the third section, moving in all directions. They are like organic beings; they produce, organize, and rearrange their own clones until they create coherent, functional mechanisms. They even confront a human being, a female who seems to have dropped by to deliver a message.

The closed space in the *Events in a Warehouse* turns into an arena in which the metal objects, symbolic of industrialized society, compete with each other. It is a world of materiality unlike the human world in *The Bathroom*. The *Warehouse* series bespeaks a “fear of materialism”—that when we let things into our lives without a balanced view, the material world will control us.¹⁷¹ Replacing the violent murder in *The Bathroom* with violent movement, dissection, and multiplication, Kawara creates a planet of objects which comes to life in the absence of humans. The warehouse is a sanctuary for the modern products made to serve people. While the bathroom encloses men in despair, the warehouse breeds industrial machines that would overwhelm humans.

Butcher’s Wife or Angry Woman

Returning home after World War Two, many Japanese soldiers faced betrayal by their wives and the collapse of home and family. Their stories of suffering in a disabled and disrupted society were often depicted in postwar novels. Deprived of a sense of normalcy, men from the battlefields had a hard time adjusting to a new home and society. Often physically and mentally disabled, husbands and sons never regained the patriarchal

authority and respect that they used to have. As they watched their social status fall, they had to endure the shame that they not only failed to win the war, but also disappointed their family. The defeat therefore disrupted the traditional status of women within the family. The authority of the patriarchal system was threatened by frustrated, even angry women who were forced to take over the roles of husbands and fathers including financial responsibilities. Japanese women gained increasing freedom, independence and a new sense of self in the postwar society. Women were given the right to vote in 1946 for the first time in the country's history. A falling birth rate meant significant change in the lives of Japanese mothers: a married woman had an average of five children in 1940 but by the 1970s, the number dropped below two.¹⁷²

Postwar novels relate stories of angry mothers and wives who recognize the frailty of men after the war, and find that their identity is changing or changeable as the patriarchy ails. In those novels, the changes in women's status become a measure of societal transformation. Men's egos are shattered by their physical and financial inability to protect or support their families. Women emerge as "others" who confront the flaws of patriarchal authority in which they used to place their trust.¹⁷³ The improvement of women's voices in the family reflects a fundamental shift in familial relationships, a shift made possible by "the forces of relativism" propelled by the war.¹⁷⁴

Dazai Osamu (1909-1948)'s *Setting Sun (Shayo)* from 1947 deals with the collapse of an aristocratic family during the war.¹⁷⁵ The protagonist Kazuko becomes fatherless and divorces after the war. Her brother returns from the war a drug addict, and later commits suicide. Her mother's abrupt death sets Kazuko free from the residue of the old world, of nobility and dignity. In "Homecoming (*Kikyō*)" by Osaragi Jiro (b.1897) published in

1948 in the Mainichi Newspaper, a former officer during the war returns home after a long, difficult journey from Malacca, to find that his wife has remarried, to a university professor. In Mishima's *Thirst for Love* (1969), the protagonist, Etsuko, is another traumatized woman who kills her young lover. After the war which killed her husband, she retreats to the countryside after, and becomes the mistress of her father-in-law. However, she later finds she has fallen in love with Saburo, a young farm boy whom she can easily control, unlike her father-in-law. Etsuko changes in the story from a passive figure to a self-confident person who controls first herself and then her lover. In a familiar Mishima plot, she eventually murders the boy claiming that passionate and fatal love drove her to kill.¹⁷⁶ When pressed to explain the motive of the murder, she answers, "He got what he deserved for hurting me. Nobody has the right to cause me pain. Nobody can get away with that."¹⁷⁷

In a short story, "On the Train (*Kisha no naka*)" (1948), Kojima Nobuo presents a frail school teacher named Sano and his family, who head for Tokyo on a train to find a living. Mentally weakened and shocked by the war, Sano experiences numerous shameful incidents on the train such as his desperate search for a bathroom which ends when he must urinate in public.¹⁷⁸ His inability to adjust worsens and eventually all of his belongings are stolen, including some contraband rice. His wife screams, "You idiot! You're stingy and filthy, and you have no pride. But you're generous enough to let all your things be stolen. It's a wonder your own body wasn't snatched from you!"¹⁷⁹ Facing his lack of hope, he ponders dying, the ultimate solution to all the humiliation and shame: "If I'm going to die anyway, what manner of death should I choose? Death is an

unknown, but the world is full of such unknowns. Should I really take leave of it all? To die, and have everything come to an end.”¹⁸⁰

The models of emotionally-disturbed women are also present in Kawara's work, often becoming the agents of violence. In *Butcher's Wife* (Fig. 36), Kawara depicts a woman with a blackened eye wearing an apron covered with blood stains. She is standing as if she just stopped cleaning her workshop after extensive carving, probably of human-meat. This wife seems to summon the angry voices of frustrated wives and women who had to cope with husbands and men whose will to live has been destroyed. The butcher, the original owner of the place, is absent from the picture. He may already have been processed by her hands and ended up in the pile of heads on the floor. The small workspace is full of pieces of dead bodies, evidence of a cannibalistic activity unimaginable in the pre-war period. Instead of dreaming of a rosy future life with her family, as the imperial military had promised, she now takes charge in the most horrible manner in a desperate attempt to survive the hunger that attacked the entire country. She is apparently the victim of a collapsed family under the failed patriarchy. The downfall of old values has destroyed the hopes and expectations she had invested in her children and husband. The wife in the picture gazes back at the viewer as if she were reborn to an independent existence, dissociated from the old, flawed and unfair world of fathers and husbands.

Kawara, in the *Birth of the Illegitimate Child* (Fig. 45), portrayed the horror and fear of a woman surrounding the birth of a baby with no legal biological father. Like the pregnant women in *The Bathroom* series, the woman exemplifies frustrating sex and unwelcome pregnancy, giving birth to a father-less child, followed by anger and murder.

Born out of an extramarital relationship, or simply abandoned by their fathers for economic or cultural reasons, unlawful children were often left in the already overburdened hands of women. Whoever fathered the baby is absent from the scene. While one woman with a baby turns her gaze away from the scene, and a pregnant woman stands frozen while looking at the killing, a guardian-like figure in a gown is stabbing a baby. She is surrounded by a pile of murdered and mutilated pregnant women and babies. A coffin placed near her suggests that the room is the site of both the birth and death of these babies.

Death Mask

While he was involved in the Producers' Discussion Group, Kawara began to conceive a series of portraits that would reveal the deformed, depressed, distorted minds of the Japanese in 1955. Kawara never neglected his role as a witness to the critical moments in postwar history, and *Portrait of the Japanese* is probably the most explicit and provocative of his works made in Japan. The *Death Mask* (Figs. 37 and 38) sequence is the first part of this incomplete series. In elaborate and often satirical black and white pencil drawings, Kawara portrayed the faces of ordinary Japanese people from images he saw in newspapers and magazines, or sketched from people he encountered on the street.¹⁸¹ Rather than creating exact portraits of specific sitters, these are composites of characters that Kawara observed in many different people; the series is a collection of human faces both encountered and imagined. The portraits fall roughly into two types: the first are people whose physical bodies were wounded or scarred during the war, or marked by illness or starvation. The second type consists of people whose mental health

has been ruined by fear, or by social oppression.¹⁸² Not only Japanese but other ethnic faces—white, Asian, and black—appear among the portraits. Kawara might have extended the series to include all human races that live in the world in the twentieth century.¹⁸³

The series exposes a ravaged humanity and moral corruption in postwar society. He distorts human faces to divulge their rotten spirits and their having arrived at the lowest point of their conscience. Kawara once emphasized the significance of the human face, its concentration of four senses of seeing, hearing, tasting and smelling.¹⁸⁴ The “death” of the series title suggests the demise of conscience and morality rather than physical death. Different degrees of madness and narrow-mindedness are expressed through facial muscles and gazes. For example, the black and hollow eyes of a bureaucrat are full of suspicion. A middle-aged man’s mouth vents his frustrated sexuality. These striking images of decadence, suffering, and death are rendered in monochromatic, black and white drawing. The portraits represent a barren field of humanity, the legacy of the extreme fascist regime as “a collection of existences” heading toward the ultimate destination of death.¹⁸⁵ The moral tone embedded in the series reveals Kawara’s frustration with the socio-cultural climate of the time.¹⁸⁶ Through the masks, he would alert society to awaken from moral insensitivity and decay, which may eventually lead to the collective destruction of humanity.¹⁸⁷ The series calls implicitly for spiritual enlightenment, reflecting his belief that art is neither a mechanical reflection nor an abstract reaction to reality. Rather art should be “based on an artist’s true recognition and active and subjective grasp of contradictions within the society,” seen through the eyes of a brave artist.¹⁸⁸

Kawara's extensive writings and interviews provide a source for understanding how he approached the concepts such as matter and idea, and figuration and abstraction. In discussing the relation between realism and the idea of matter, Kawara admitted that he found matter or the material inseparable from human conditions. He criticized Okamoto, an artist and art theorist, who distanced himself from realism in favor of novel inventions. Kawara was bold in opposing Okamoto, one of the most influential figures in postwar Japanese art.¹⁸⁹ Questioning Okamoto's preference for abstract painting and for distance from reality, Kawara called for a grasp of real life in art and keen observation of social reality without sacrificing aesthetics.¹⁹⁰ He believed that art should work in concert with social reform, yet should not be propagandistic. The artist should take social realities into account yet remain cautiously detached from active political engagement. All these self-imposed requirements may have trapped him in a dead end in which he could not figure out a way to truly integrate the aesthetic and the political. Except for the *Death Mask* sequence, Kawara never completed the *Portrait of the Japanese* series. Instead in 1957, he turned to print making and elaborated his theory of "printed painting" and "multiple original paintings."

"Printed Painting (*insatsu kaiga*)" after the Crisis of Painting

For Kawara, as well as other postwar artists, the problem of creating a new mode of painting was inextricably related to the need to transform Japan from the state of a feudal to a modern state after the war. In a discussion in 1956, Kawara called attention to the fact that Japan had gone through a different course in reaching modernism from that of the west.¹⁹¹ Unlike western modernism, Japanese modernism did not go through

progressive phases motivated by inner necessity; instead it was a product of western imposition, an abrupt discontinuity between Edo Japan and the Meiji Revolution. The different experiences of modernism between Japan and its western counterparts naturally brought up the question, how Japan was to be reformed from within its own historical situation. Kawara argued that in order to reform the prevailing reality, it was essential to recognize the specificity of Japanese history, to examine possible class struggles in the prior reform process, and to recognize the power of ordinary people.¹⁹² While he was not clear about what kind of “hidden power of people” he meant, he retained an idealistic tone, common among his realist artist colleagues, a hope that belief in humanity would cure almost everything.

A close look at his series of writings reveals how Kawara, after his long search for ‘art for the masses,’ gradually advanced what he called his “printed painting” projects, his ultimate creative product.¹⁹³ In a July 1955 discussion, he spoke extensively about his experience of the war, and his advocacy of realism and figurative art. In October of the same year, he called attention to the way Mexican muralists integrated their reality into their art in a brief response to *Bijutsu Hiho*, which had asked twenty six artists to respond to a September exhibition of Mexican art at the National Museum in Tokyo. In May 1956, Kawara argued that “[h]ow I got the idea for this work or how I decided to express this idea is not at issue here,” as if irritated by the common practice of looking for “meaning” or “intention” in art.¹⁹⁴ Kawara purposefully focused on the technical process of art making throughout the 1950s. Kawara’s short essay on the work *Absentee* (1956), which he submitted to the Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, reveals his growing interest in new techniques or technical processes, which he believed amounted to half of

the entire process of finishing a painting.¹⁹⁵ When an editor posed a question regarding his intention for the work, he bluntly ignored it; “I will confine myself to describing the technical process by which I created this work, because that is all that I am certain of.”¹⁹⁶ Then he went on to discuss his preliminary drawings, the number of colors he used, the length of time he worked on the piece, and so on.¹⁹⁷

In January of 1957, the following year, Kawara wrote “We should do something,” for a special issue of *Bijutsu Hihyo*.¹⁹⁸ He was exasperated with the arguments surrounding painting, issues of “absolute beauty” or “the future of painting.” When the magazine asked, “where is painting going?”, he simply answered, “[i]t is obvious where painting is going.”¹⁹⁹ Kawara argued that the kinds of painting that were in crisis tended to favor content over form. To revive painting, Kawara suggested that artists create works in which viewers could be creators, keeping in mind that individuals could have different imaginations according to their classes. Therefore, artists should consider the fact that the “imagination of a capitalist and a worker are totally different,” and thus understand each viewer’s different situation.²⁰⁰ Emphasizing that he was more interested in “painting’s function as a medium of communication,” he concluded that murals and prints might have the potential to revive the power of painting.²⁰¹

Kawara’s concern about the need to connect painting to the needs of ordinary people resonated with the general consensus of the time. Artists and critics often discussed the issue of “the crisis of tableau painting” or the limitations of painting as a medium to reflect people’s hopes and desires.²⁰² In the winter of 1958, Hariu and Wada Ito diagnosed the symptom of the “exhaustion of painting” of that year, referring to proliferating wall paintings in Japan in 1958: Yoshioka Kenji’s wall painting in

Yokohama city hall; Suda Hisashi's work in Kanuma city hall in Tochigi Prefecture; and Fukuzawa Ichiro's in Atami City and Okamoto's ceramic mural in Kanda station.²⁰³

Hariu pointed out that the artists' consciousness of painting remained, but that it had taken new forms and directions beyond the canvas support.²⁰⁴ As this concern for painting's future drove artists to turn to other areas such as graphic design, cartoon and theater design, Kawara was inventing his own form of "new painting," i.e. "*insatsu kaiga*" or "printed painting."²⁰⁵

From 1957 to 1959, Kawara seemed overwhelmed by one question, "What is painting?"²⁰⁶ Kawara devoted his final years in Japan to searching for and validating the originality of mass-produced prints. While emerging artists pursued experimental and abstract art through the Yomiuri Independent show, Kawara invented a new form combining printing and painting, hoping that art could communicate a message to a large audience. His socializing with artists working in other media, such as Hijikata Tatsumi, a young Butoh dancer who danced Mishima's *Forbidden Colors (Kinjiki)* in 1959, and Shinohara Ushio, a young emerging artist, helped prompt him to focus on his search for art for the masses.²⁰⁷ This awareness of the audience drove Kawara not only to elaborate in several essays his views on a new art targeting non-art world viewers, but also to learn to master printing techniques in a professional print shop.²⁰⁸

Kawara's "printed painting" was basically a printed poster processed through color off-set or lithographic printing.²⁰⁹ The pre-printing work is similar to collages or to Henri Matisse's paper cut-outs which required cutting and pasting paper shapes onto another sheet of paper as well as, in some cases, drawing and painting. When Kawara arrived at a final image, after the several stages of drawing, painting, cutting and pasting, he printed it

mechanically through a professional printing machine, nullifying all the hand work involved into a mere, flattened mechanical production. Yet his attempt to make multiple, original works for multiple viewers seemed to be seen successful at the time, as I will discuss.

Four types of “printed paintings” are known today: *Painting and Human* (No. 1 and No. 2) (Figs. 19 and 20), *The Wrath of the Colony* (No. 3) (Fig. 21), and *Western Fortress* (No. 4). All of the works were sold by mail order to people who responded to his several paid advertisements in the prestigious *Bijutsu Techo* magazine from May 1958 to June 1959. He prepared the ads himself, employing catchy phrases like “A painting is expensive but everyone can buy it...Take an original artwork, *insatsu kaiga*, not a reproduction, to your room...” (Fig. 50).²¹⁰ As some critics praised Kawara’s innovative new works, Kawara incorporated critics’ favorable responses in his ads, including comments from Takiguchi Shuzo, Nakahara Yusuke, Ehara Jun, all of whom advocated Kawara’s idea of affordable, “experimental” yet original prints (Fig. 51).²¹¹ This tactic of using critics’ comments, along with his price increase from the original price 300 Yen to 880 Yen as the commercial ads continued to be printed over the several months, manifested Kawara’s ambition to push the “printed painting” projects into art business for the future.

Kawara’s essay, “Conception and Proposal of Printed Paintings,” was published in the middle of his series of commercial ads—perhaps indicating another marketing tactic-- accompanied by a questionnaire, in the same magazine, in the special issue of spring 1959.²¹² In his essay, consisting of two parts, Kawara discussed how he conceived “printed painting” and how they were made through several stages of polychrome

lithography, which was illustrated by black and white photographs that showed several successive stages of the procedure (Figs. 52 and 53). Again he attested to the value of multiple “originals,” and declared that the artist’s involvement in the printing process legitimized the final products as “originals.” Based on the premise that art is communicative, he argued about the transmission of messages between a sender (artist) and a receiver (viewer). For him, art was supposed to be complete when the audience experiences an artwork and creates his/her own imaginative product. He argued that the process of art making should not end with the artist but would revive when the reader sees and reads what the artist created. His claim that “the artist is not a special human being” suggests that artistic moments occur in the act of “choosing” imagery not in skill.²¹³ In an attempt to integrate the viewers’ opinions into his art, he also added a questionnaire as a supplement to solicit responses to his selection of poetic phrases. Kawara asked readers to look at his third “printed painting,” *The Wrath of the Colony* (Fig. 21), reproduced in the magazine, and then to read his selection of verses quoted from poems of Guillaume Apollinaire, Louis Aragon, Jean Cocteau, Andre Breton, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Pierre Michault, and Comte de Lautréamont.

His departure to Mexico interrupted his new art business but did not stop his “printed painting” projects, as is evident from the subtitle of his essay written in Mexico, *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting* (1962). Yet it appears that Kawara did not see his “printed painting” as successful. He has not yet shown the works since leaving Japan.²¹⁴ In addition to that, Kawara’s argument on ‘multiple originals’ for the masses did not gain much understanding in the art world after he left Japan and most of his “printed paintings” have been forgotten or left to deteriorate in private collections.²¹⁵

Out of Japan

During the period of his experiments with printing techniques for his projects, Kawara applied for a passport to attend the World Young Students Peace Festival in Moscow in 1957. This event was held every two years by socialist countries in Europe to commemorate the friendship between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. at the Elbe River in Poland during World War II. Kawara, along with other artists, applied for passports to attend the festival as members of the People's Art Group, which had been organized by the communist novelist Abe Kobo in 1952. The Japanese government refused to issue passports to many of the applicants, including dancers, laborers, teachers and others. Demonstrations against this anti-communist policy took place before the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The incident left Kawara frustrated with the invisible limits on freedom in Japan. In September 1959, when his father who was working as an engineer in Mexico asked Kawara to come to the Central American country, he took the opportunity to leave Japan.²¹⁶ This move would turn into a permanent voluntary exile. He did not return to his home country until the winter of 1970 and 1971, over a decade after his departure, for a temporary visit.

Kawara's choice to leave his country was perhaps the only escape that he had at a time when his printed painting projects had almost reached the ultimate goal. What was in store for him after the printed painting? Takiguchi, who had followed young Kawara since his debut, perceived Kawara's struggle of the time and his inevitable new direction: "An artist such as [Bernard] Buffet may eventually return to the great European artistic traditions, but does Kawara have a source to go back to?"²¹⁷ Emerging out of the postwar

turmoil yet always received as having certain “non-Japanese” characteristics, Kawara seemed to have reached a point close to the end of his creativity. His departure in 1959, whether he wanted to or not, led to a new source or another breakthrough.

The fast changing art climate of the late 1950s also contributed to Kawara’s exile. Japanese artists were turning away from political, ideological approaches and were reluctant to accept realism as the sole effective art form, questioning its didactic aspects and overt dependence on subject matter. Critics demanded artistic quality and aesthetic value from art. Hariu, a leading left-wing critic, was already criticizing the Nihon Independent exhibition in 1953, for presenting so many Socialist Realists.²¹⁸ Hariu attacked their lack of originality and formal innovation and their stubborn adherence to subject matter, although he had been known for sympathizing with the movement.²¹⁹ Although critical of Reportage Painting in reviewing the “Nippon Ten,” Hariu, who had remained somewhat sympathetic with the ideas of the art movement, surrendered his credentials as a proponent of Reportage Painting and, moved by Michel Tapié’s writings, advocated a “return to Dada” as an exit from the trauma from World War II in 1957.²²⁰ In his 1990’s reminiscence of the year 1957, Hariu defended that his switch to the new artistic spirit was a response to the new demand despite the accusation that he had “abandoned their [Reportage painters] cause.”²²¹

Efforts to bring diversity and a sense of liberty to young artists were already being made. To serve thirsty young artists in Japan who anxiously wanted to know what was happening in Europe, Okamoto organized in November 1956 an exhibition, “*Sekai Konnichi no Bijutsu Ten* (World Art Today),” sponsored by Asahi Newspapers with the help of Imai Toshimitsu in France who connected Okamoto to Michel Tapié. Held in the

Takashimaya department store in Tokyo, the show introduced to Japanese viewers artists such as Georges Mathieu, Jean Dubuffet, Karl Appel, Matta, Wilfredo Lam, Willem de Kooning, Hans Hartung, Mark Tobey, Jean Fautrier and Lucio Fontana, covering the scope from Surrealism to Optic Art.²²² Although the exhibition heavily relied on Michel Tapié's own collection of art, it was later recorded as the first exhibition in Japan in which Japanese saw a wide range of contemporary art from the U.S. and France including abstract art and *Art Informel*.²²³

The exhibition drastically transformed the way many Japanese artists viewed and practiced abstract art. The question imposed by the magazine *Bijutsu Hihyo* in January 1957, "where is painting going?," reflected a thesis that Kawara and his realist colleagues were compelled to face.²²⁴ Kawara responded to it with his idea of "printed painting" maintaining his view of the superiority of figurative painting over abstract, formal works, while his fellow artist Ikeda called for confronting the present rather than pre-planning or speculating about the future.²²⁵

Meanwhile, the Yomiuri Independent was building its reputation as the haven of the new avant-gardes, as Munroe calls "the third generation of postwar artists."²²⁶ The 9th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition in 1957 was dominated by gestural abstract painting in the manner of *Art Informel*.²²⁷ The Independent continued to be overwhelmed with diverse materials and expressive modes until the Yomiuri Newspaper Company, the major sponsor, decided to close it because of the participants' excessive dadaist performances in 1963.²²⁸ The impact of *Art Informel* lingered for a long time and transformed the younger generation's art after that year.²²⁹ Employing dada-like strategies in their work, they made art from junk such as found objects and staged violent

demonstrations as a gesture against the conventional practices of art. The artists, through their messy and sometimes anarchistic art forms and performances, explored new art that would liberate them from the gloomy, depressing memory of wartime, recognizing the need to move beyond Japan in a new era as I will discuss further in Chapter Two.²³⁰

Many artists were leaving Japan to study or travel at the time. One of the members of Producers' Discussion Group, Ida Yoshikuni, went to Italy in 1956 in November. In April, 1958, Maeda Tsunesaku went to France. Fujimasu Hiroshi went to the U.S. almost at the same time as Kawara left Japan. In 1960, other artists such as Asakura Setsu and Toneyama Kojin, colleagues of Kawara, also left Japan to the U.S. Hiroshino Yoshiaki traveled to Mexico and the U.S.²³¹ Some Japanese artists proceeded to move to New York, the newly emerged city of international artists, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

NOTES

¹ Kawara, "Essay: Dream of Cinemascope," *Bijutsu Techo* 115 (October 1956): 61. This dream is quoted in Yokoyama Tadashi, "At the Junction of Time and Space: On Kawara in the 1950s," *On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo* (Tokyo: Parco, 1991), 61. Yokoyama mistakenly wrote the month of publication as July in his footnote.

² Kawara, 61.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. Translated by Sumi Hiroko by the author's commission.

⁵ His interest in cinema brought him to write a critique of a movie. See Kawara, "Critique of Cinema Color: *Bride in Ootorijyo Castle* (made by Toei Scope)," *Bijutsu Techo* 126 (June, 1957): 74-75. In the essay, Kawara called for a more creative way to use the large screen of Cinemascope.

⁶ Kawara, "Essay: Dream of Cinemascope" 61.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Yokoyama, 64.

⁹ Ibid., 61-62.

¹⁰ The former is composed of twenty eight drawings, and the latter, thirty one works.

¹¹ Okabe Aomi, "Action et Avant-Garde," *Japon des Avnat-gardes 1910-1970* (Paris : Centre Georges Pompidou, 1986), 350.

¹² Takiguchi Shuzo, "*Shinjin no jokyo ni tsuite* [Trends among the newcomers]," *Bijutsu Techo* (January 1958): 33; quoted in Yokoyama, 62.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Miura Masashi, "On Date Painting," *On Kawara* (Tokyo: Gatodo Gallery, 1986), n.p. The exhibition was held from April 1-26, 1986.

¹⁵ Kawara's comment during a discussion led by Hariu Ichiro, "Toward New Images of Human Beings," *Bijutsu Hihyo* (July 1955): 45.

¹⁶ Hariu early on recognized Kawara's potential as a social, psychological critic of postwar Japan in the first "*Nippon Ten*" in 1953. He consistently advocated Kawara's early works in Japan as portrayal of the psychology of the period in most of his writings. His publication of 1979, *Sengo bijutsu seisui shi* [Vicissitudes of Postwar Art], (Tokyo: Tokyo Book Co., 1979), described Kawara in the same trajectory.

¹⁷ "Towards New Images of Human Beings," 48.

¹⁸ Ibid., 46.

¹⁹ Arthur G. Kimball, *Crisis in Identity and Contemporary Japanese Novels* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1973), 24

²⁰ This date of birth is based on his work *One Hundred Year Calendar* (1969).

²¹ Linda Weintraub, "On Kawara: Self-documentation," *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s-1990s* (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, 1996), 57.

²² Kawara told me during the March 2002 conversation that whenever he grasped the key points of each class, he used to spend the extra remaining class time in drawing.

²³ This is the year that Japanese historians see that Kawara entered the art world; see Yokoyama, 55.

²⁴ Takiguchi, 33; quoted in Yokoyama, 62.

²⁵ The term and concept was first used by Nakahara Yusuke, an art critic, who wrote “*Mishitsu no kaiga* [Pictures of locked rooms],” an essay that deals with paintings that depict psychologically oppressed humanity. See *Bijutsu Hihyo* (June 1956): 20-30.

²⁶ Hariu, *Vicissitudes of Postwar Art*, 83-84.

²⁷ Yokoyama, 59.

²⁸ Chiba Shigeo, *Deviations in Contemporary Art 1945-1985* (Tokyo: Shobunsha, 1986), 18-20.

²⁹ Alexandra Munroe, *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 24.

³⁰ Masuda Tsuji, a contemporary Japanese writer, describes in a positive tone the liberating experience and hopeful thoughts of the time: “Japan's defeat in August 1945 made us fear for the continued existence of our nation but also filled us with an exhilarating sense of release from the stifling restrictions of the war years. We had followed a path to certain catastrophe and yet survived. For those of the younger generation, the end of the war was the start of a new journey into a post-war world of shining hope.” [title of his article] Quoted in *On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo*, 6.

³¹ Hariu Ichiro, “Progressive Trends in Modern Japanese Art,” *Reflections: Avant-garde Art in Japan 1945-1965* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1985), 24.

³² Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994), 173.

The Allied Occupation of Japan lasted six and a half years, from September 1945 to April 1952. It entailed two international advisory boards, but the United States devised and determined most of the basic policies. Under the direction of MacArthur, Tokyo war tribunals were held from 1946 to 1948. (Dower, 23) Two thousand war crimes trials were conducted in Japan, Southeast Asia, and other Asian and Pacific locales. (Buruma, 160-61) The war tribunals condemned 700 to death and further exposed ordinary Japanese citizens for the first time to news of atrocities such as the Nanking Massacre in 1937 and Rape of Manila in early 1945 which had been suppressed.

³³ Dower, 45.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

The situation in the former Japanese colonies and occupied areas abroad was not less gruesome. When the war was over, 6.5 million Japanese became stranded in Asia, Siberia, and the Pacific area, among them 3.5 million soldiers. In China alone, 2.6 million

Japanese soldiers were stationed, and there were 900,000 in Korea, and 900,000 in Southeast Asia and the Philippines. Many of Japan's military resources fell under the control of China or the U.S.S.R and many Japanese became victimized by angry locals who finally obtained their opportunity for revenge. Most of the displaced Japanese managed to come back to their homeland after abandoning all their businesses and property. Six million returned home between October 1945 and December 1946. They returned with empty hands adding more burden to the already collapsed economy and to the fragile public health attacked by malnutrition and contagious diseases such as tuberculosis.

³⁶ Dower, 83.

³⁷ Torn between matters of practicality and the desire to reform Japan, many of the Occupation government's attempts to re-structure failed to succeed. Another example is the parliamentary system. Based on the British model, a Japanese parliament was formulated but the efforts to inject U.S. concepts such as empowerment of local government over the police and educational institutions proved for the most part not very successful. If there was a significant change during the occupation, it appeared in the status of women and the educational system. Women's status in the society was legally secured with their obtaining the right to vote in 1946, and obtaining equal opportunities in public education. The number of high school students increased consistently to around ninety percent of the age group by the late 1970s, and college students to around one-third of the age group. See Reischauer, "Allied Occupation," *Japan Examined: Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, eds. Harry Wray and Hilary Conroy, (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1983), 339-40 and Dower, "Reform and Reconsolidation," *Japan Examined*, 348

³⁸ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 27

³⁹ MacArthur's singular command over the occupation, his very title of Supreme Commander, epitomized the U.S. monopoly and power during this period. There was no challenge to his authority. See Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 73-74.

⁴⁰ Dower, "Reform and Reconsolidation," 346; the chaotic situation under the Occupation was widespread from the political parties to ordinary citizens, from the newly-emerging labor movement encouraged by socialist and communist agendas to the bureaucrats' demands for reform.

⁴¹ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 27

⁴² Whether Japan was ready for reform during the immediate post-war period or not was not a big issue for many specialists on Japan. The writers in *Japan Examined* made arguments based on the premise that in spite of some resistance, Japan in general wanted to implement a truly modern social system. Dower states, "while most of the significant early occupation reforms were opposed by the old guard and found greatest support

among the progressives and the dispossessed, in the final analysis the legacy of the occupation was a new conservative hegemony in Japan. In part this development can be attributed to revisions in U.S. occupation policy beginning around 1947 and prompted by the cold war and America's own postwar economic crisis." See Dower, "Reform and Reconsolidation," 345.

⁴³ Harada Hiroko, *Aspects of Post-War German and Japanese Drama (1945-1970): Reflections on War, Guilt, and Responsibility* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 15.

These socialist ideas, in spite of the vehement ideological censorship in the 1930s, survived the fascist era and joined the reformation initiated by the Occupation.

⁴⁴ Buruma, 54.

⁴⁵ Kaido Kazu, "Reconstruction: The Role of the Avant-garde in Post-War Japan," essay in the catalogue, *Reconstructions: Avant-garde Art in Japan 1945-1965* (Oxford, England: Museum of Modern Art, 1985), 15.

⁴⁶ Buruma, 61.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

The equation of the pre-modern glory of Japan with the source of nationalism dates back to the fascist era in the 1940s. As the intensity of the nationalist tone increased in the early 1940s, especially after the outbreak of the Pacific War, a symposium was held in Kyoto in July 1942 to discuss the issues of modernism, tradition and Japanese identity. Participants, including scholars and historians, reexamined the state of Japanese society and culture that had been developed at a dizzying speed since the Meiji period. Among the investigated topics were the worth of compartmentalizing ways of seeing "Americanism"; the risk of submission to the West in adopting western culture; and the conception of progress. Identifying modernism with westernization--a long-standing belief in Japan throughout the first half of the twentieth century--the participants discussed the possibility of rebuilding Japan based on Japan's own history and traditions.

The Kyoto symposium was not only "the culmination of decades of intellectual protest against Western political, economic, and cultural influence in Asia," (Munroe, "Scream against the Sky," *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, 24.) but was also a staged forum to "reveal the outline of a 'glorious new age'" for Japan. (See H. D. Harootunian, "Visible Discourse/Invisible Ideologies," *Postmodernism and Japan* ed. Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian [Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989], 67)

It was also a remarkably timely event when the fascist government desperately needed to provide a reasoning that could justify the war with the U.S. Being modern, according

to the participants, should be reconsidered in order to recognize the value of tradition. The modern was not desirable any longer but something to “overcome” as the title of the symposium, “Overcoming the Modern,” indicated. Return to the past was inevitable for Japan to renew industrialized society; traditional art and folklore such as architecture were seen as the source of inspiration.

⁵⁰ Buruma, 99-100.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 100-101.

⁵³ Alain Resnais’s *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (screenplay by Marguerite Duras, 1959) came out later, and the French director seemed aware of Sekigawa’s *Hiroshima* (1953). It has been said that Resnais was critical of some of the scenes in the Japanese film. While the French New Wave film covered the Hiroshima bombing for about fifteen minutes in the beginning, the rest of story was about a complex love story between a Japanese man and a French woman (whose names are never given) against the background of the bombed city. See www.mapage.noos.fr/cinema-japonais.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 101.

⁵⁵ Harada, 14.

⁵⁶ During an interview for an art magazine in January 1941, a military officer named Suzuki stated about what can be described as the cultural policy of the military government in the 1940s; “It is no use being proud of holding liberal beliefs. If you do not follow our guidelines, we will stop the rations of paint and canvas. We regard them as weapons of ideological war. I would risk my position fighting against the exclusive liberal attitudes of ‘pure art’.” See “Defense Nation and Art,” *Mizue* (January 1941); in Kaido, “Reconstruction: The Role of the Avant-garde in Post-War Japan,” 11.

⁵⁷ The literary field made the first move in restoring the suppressed “democratic tradition” of the prewar era. Many considered it necessary to establish a new tradition via a complete break with the past. For that, it was required to confront the issue of responsibility for the war immediately. Questioning of writers of propagandistic and Fascist literature was initiated by members of the proletarian literary movements of the 1920s and 1930s as early as January 1946.

The first issue of *Bungaku Jihyo* [Comments on Current Literature] (January 1946) published articles by Ara Masato, Odagiri Hideo, and others who concordantly emphasized the need for questioning the war responsibility of literary figures who, either directly or indirectly, had supported the war and the fascist government. They further made a list of about forty writers who were suspected of participating in war crimes. Another new journal, *Shin Nihon Bungaku* [New Japanese Literature] (1946 – present) also listed twenty-five writers for the same type of crime. The writers were held

responsible for “the deterioration of Japanese literature”; for acting “as spokesmen of the aggression policy”; and for working as informers to the secret service by labeling their rivals as communist or liberal. Above all, they were accused of veiling the war in the name of humanism and of coercing young men to the battlefields. See Harada, 11-14.

⁵⁸ Some of the member artists in the Japan Art Society overtly expressed their following of Stalinism and Socialist Realism, when the Occupation allowed communists to join the reforming project. The new art world, according to their plan, should be erected upon “the establishment of guaranteed standards of living, the setting up of democratically run exhibitions and the furtherance of art education for the workers.” (Hariu, “Progressive Trends in Modern Japanese Art,” 25)

Consisting of both communist and liberal artists and critics, the Society aspired to unite artists as legitimate workers who would be able to survive on a standardized income. However, some members’ extreme following of Stalinism and Socialist Realism caused many other artists to leave the organization. Their mission to rectify the remnants of the old went farther toward leading an opposition movement against government-led annual exhibitions. They instead proposed an alternative exhibition, *Kobo Dantai Rengo Ten* [Joint Exhibition of Art Groups], which was held in 1946.

This group should be distinguished from *Nihon Bijutsu Kyokai* (or Japan Art Association), which has a long history dating from the late-19th century, and is still active, and known to give “imperial prizes” to international artists. I thank Reiko Tomii for pointing out this difference.

⁵⁹ Hariu, “Progressive Trends in Modern Japanese Art,” 24.

⁶⁰ John Clark, “Artistic Subjectivity in the Taisho and Early Showa Avant-Garde,” *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s*, eds. by Elise K. Tipton and John Clark (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2000), 50.

⁶¹ 1950s newspaper company-sponsored exhibitions began to bring original western works to Japan. Yomiuri and Mainichi competed to open new exhibitions while Asahi concentrated on music first but later joined the competition. Among the exhibitions of the time were “Masterpieces of 20th Century Art” (March 1950, Yomiuri), which introduced Matisse, Picasso, and Georges Braque; “International Contemporary Art” (August 1950, Yomiuri); “Salon de Main in Japan” (February 1951, Mainich); and “Yomiuri Independent Exhibition” (February 1951) which had a special show of foreign artists such as Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, Jean Dubuffet, and Sam Francis. For more details, see Nakajima Michihiro, “Phenomenon of Fast Changing Art: History of 10 Years,” *Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 51.

The rebuilding of the infrastructure for new Japanese art began with large scale exhibitions; *Nihon Independent* was founded in 1947. In 1948, the *Bunten* sponsored by the government, which had been revived after the war in 1946, changed its format and title to *Nitten*, which employed a democratic, open entry system without juried competition. In 1949, the first “Yomiuri Independent Exhibition” was held. *Bijutsuka*

Renmei (Artists' League) was established in the same year. See Ikeda Tatsuo, *Dream, Reality, Document: One Painter's Testimony of His Age* (Tokyo, 1990), 196-98.

Above all, the role of the three newspaper companies in the postwar art world is important. They not only sponsored numerous exhibitions of foreign artists but also established awards and exhibitions for domestic artists in the postwar period. Among them were two major exhibitions, "Yomiuri Independent Exhibition" (1949-1963) and "International Art Exhibition of Japan" (1952-) (or Tokyo Biennale) sponsored by Mainichi newspaper company. The annually held Yomiuri Independent provided a nest for post-war Japanese avant-gardes while the bi-annual introduced international art to the Japanese audience actively throughout 1950s and 1960s. After the 1970 show, the Tokyo Biennale faced criticism as to whether it could be cost-effective and audience-catching, and it began to lose its dynamism.

⁶² Pre-war art magazines such as *Mizue* and *Atelier* resumed publishing in 1946.

⁶³ Ikeda, 196-98.

Bijutsu Hihyo lasted from 1952 to 1957, epitomizing a critical period. It promoted young emerging artists and encouraged debates among artists and critics. See Sato Shigeomi, "Magazine 'Biutsu Hihyo'," *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964): 66-67

⁶⁴ The immediate postwar social and political situation prevented the Japanese art world from inviting original artworks from foreign countries. In 1948, an exhibition displayed only "reproductions of French paintings" such as Matisse and Braque. In spite of its visual limitations, the exhibition received great deal of attention from the art community, especially from young artists who were thirsty for new information from Europe. See Gorden Washburn, "Japanese Influences on Contemporary Art: A Dissenting View," *Dialogue in Art: Japan and the West*, ed. Chisaburoh F. Yamada (Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International Ltd., 1976), 211.

A Matisse exhibition in May 1951, sponsored by the Yomiuri Newspaper, attracted more than 150,000 people to the Tokyo National Museum. In August of the same year, a Picasso show was opened sponsored by the Yomiuri Newspaper company. In September 1952, a Braque exhibition was held in the Tokyo National Museum sponsored by the Yomiuri Newspaper. The same museum held a Rouault exhibition in October 1953.

⁶⁵ Hariu, "Japanese Art as Seen in the Venice Biennale 1952-68," *The Venice Biennale: 40 Years of Japanese Participation* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation & The Mainichi Newspapers, 1995), 21.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ One of the international exhibitions that Japanese artists attended during this time was the "Salon de mai" held in Paris. It had been started by French artists during the German occupation. The artists found their way of expressing frustration and resistance in primitivism. Their attempt to unite the language of modern art and reality provoked a decision to invite Japanese artists who were also struggling to include reality in their

pursuit of creativity in post-war Japan. In 1952 the organizers of the “Salon de mai” invited forty Japanese artists to submit their work. However, Japanese self-evaluation after the submission dictated that they would need to define what contemporary Japanese art should be. Atsuo Imaizumi, Assistant Director of the Tokyo Museum of Modern Art, who was visiting Paris at that time, wrote in a newspaper article that most of the Japanese works in the show were “uniformly dark and dull.” As Hariu views this incident, the post-war Japanese art world did not build a perspective on international art, as opposed to Japanese art, and failed to recognize “the eclectic and conservative nature of the French work in the Salon.” See Hariu, “Progressive Trends in Modern Japanese Art,” 25.

⁶⁸ Wakita Kazu participated in the Guggenheim International, which allocated entries to twenty two countries such as Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, and Turkey.

⁶⁹ Matsumoto Toru, “Japanese Art in the 1950s and 60s: Surrounded by a Transparent Wall,” *Japanese Modern Art: Painting from 1910 to 1970*, ed. Irmtraud Schaarschmidt-Richter (Zurich: Edition Stemmler, 2000), 68.

⁷⁰ Ikeda, 190.

⁷¹ The first one was held from April 26 to May 3. The second show was presented in the same place from December 8 to 29, 1953.

⁷² Ikeda, 185.

⁷³ Hijikata Teiichi, “Problem of Modern Western Painting,” *Mizue* (November 1946); quoted in Ogura Tadao, “Direction of Realism Debate,” *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964): 54.

⁷⁴ Hayashi Fumio, “Revival of Modernism,” *Mizue* (November 1946); quoted in Ogura, 54.

⁷⁵ See “What is Realism of the Twentieth Century?” a discussion by Hijikata, Fukujawa Ichiro, and Hongo in *BBBB* (January 1950).

⁷⁶ Hariu, “Progressive Trends in Modern Japanese Art,” 25.

⁷⁷ Arata Tani, “Transitional Period of Criticism: Analysis of *Bijutsu Hihyo*,” *Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 62. See also Sato Shigeomi, “Magazine ‘*Biutsu Hihyo*’,” *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964): 66-67. The discourse around “*mono*” (matter) at the time was closely studied in the exhibition “1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan.” See its catalogue, *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan*, trans. Reiko Tomii (Tokyo: Tama Art University, 1997). The show was held in the Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo, from June 8 to July 21, 1996.

My gratitude to Reiko Tomii for informing me about the catalogue translated into English.

⁷⁸ Nakahara Yusuke, "Modern Myth," *Bijutsu Hihyo* (October 1955). See also Okamoto Kenjiro's two essays, "Social Responsibility of Art" I and II in *Bijutsu Hihyo* (October/November, 1952).

⁷⁹ Hayami Akira, "Between Independence and Deconstruction: Categorizing Major Works," *Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 61; and Minemura Toshiaki, "The Realism of Tactility: Another Japan That Erupted," *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan*, 48-9.

Minemura also calls "Reportage Painting" as "Social Realism," differentiating it from Socialist Realism advocated by the Communist Party.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Kaido, 17

⁸² Surrealism in the Japan of the 1930s had ardent followers such as Takiguchi, devoted to theorizing and practicing the function of the unconscious in art.

⁸³ Originally trained in traditional Japanese painting, Kusama, like Kawara, explored to use Surrealist method and oil and canvas technique in her early works in Japan such as *Accumulation of Corpses (Prisoner Surrounded by a Curtain of Depersonalization)* (1950).

For a discussion of Kawara and Kusama as postwar Surrealists engaging the war-stricken society, see Tatehata Akira, "Kusama as Autonomous Surrealist," *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, 1998), 60-9.

⁸⁴ The exhibition was organized by Yamada Satoshi, curator of the Nagoya City Art Museum. See the catalogue, *Realism in Postwar Japan 1945-1960* (Nagoya, Japan: Nagoya City Art Museum, 1998).

⁸⁵ Hariu, "Return to Existence," *Bijutsu Hihyo* (May 1953).

⁸⁶ Kawara, "*Kaiga no shinmetori* [Symmetry in Painting]," in "Remarks by New Artists: Seven Participants of 'Today's New Artists'" *Bijutsu Techo* (March 1956): 58.

⁸⁷ The first "Nippon Ten" was held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tokyo on June 22, 1953.

⁸⁸ The artists of the Young Artists' Federation [*Seinen bijutsuka rengo*] were willing to integrate political issues into art and sympathized with leftist and Communist opposition to the American military presence in Asia.

After the second show in 1954, the show was organized by the Avant-Garde Society and it continued every year until 1959 in spite of opposition by the Young Artists Federation. The Avant-Garde Art Society was founded in 1947 by Maruki Iri, Yamashita

Kikuji and Ide Norio, whose audacious murals surprised the art world with Surrealist images of the horrors of the Hiroshima. See Munroe, “Scream Against the Sky,” 24.

⁸⁹ Nakajima Michihiro, “International Exchange and Individual Stage: Tracing Major Exhibitions,” *Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 44.

⁹⁰ It was held from June 22 and July 4 in 1953. Among the participants were Ikeda Masuo, Ikeda Tatsuo, Yamamoto Shinjiro, Manabe Hiroshi, Toneyama Mitsuhito, Okamoto Shinjiro, Mori Takeshiro, Nakamura Hiroshi, and On Kawara.

⁹¹ Ikeda, 174.

Here, Ikeda wrote, “What was impressive in ‘*Nippon Ten*’ was Akebana village story painted by Yamashita Kikuji who portrayed residents of the Yamanashi Prefecture. Perhaps this village story could represent Reportage Painting because it showed important aspects of Reportage Painting. Another interesting work was presented by Nakamura Hiroshi. It was a small painting about steam engine which made energy for a train. Nakamura’s method seemed to follow the style of Ben Shan. I was so impressed by the work because I detected talent in this rather young unknown artist.”

Ikeda interacted with Kawara and other artists who had similar concerns and interests via group exhibitions and artists’ organizations. One of his memoirs, *Dream, Reality, Document: One Painter’s Testimony of His Age* (1990) tells a story of Japanese contemporary art based on his notes and diary after World War II. In the book, he narrates how he first met Kawara in 1953 and maintained an artistic relationship with him up until Kawara left Japan in 1959. His memoir also documents the chaotic, unpredictable political and social situation around the time along with his personal perception and observations.

⁹² Interview with Ikeda, July 19, 2001. Ikeda also recollected in his memoir how much he had been impressed with the works by Kawara in the *Nippon Ten*: “Also impressive was *The Bathroom* series, more than twenty works in pencil made by On Kawara. This series was quite different from typical Japanese artworks. It seemed to express a cruel tragedy in a bathroom, made by a non-Japanese. I mean that his work smelled like a western artwork that easily transformed the canvas. I was so impressed with his unexpected conception. After that, I maintained friendship with Kawara On. He was very shy but we had stimulating conversations. But this kind of communication developed later.” See Ikeda, 174.

⁹³ Interview with Ikeda, July 19, 2001.

⁹⁴ Interview with Yamada Satoshi on July 20, 2001.

⁹⁵ Another artist who used *katakana* for his name is abstractionist Onosato Toshinobu, whose practice coincided with Kawara’s in terms of the time period of the early 1950s. Thanks to Reiko Tomii for pointing out this artist.

Defying or perhaps making fun of language conventions, Kawara initiated his long play with communicative media such as words, letters, numbers and codes that would prevail his art in the 1960s. His recognition of the function of language reappeared in 1959 when he first published his questionnaire in *Bijutsu Techo* before he left Japan. I will discuss the question of language in Kawara's art further in chapter four.

⁹⁶ Hariu Ichiro, "atarashii realism no tameni: Nippon ten ni yo sete [For New Realism: on 'Nippon Ten'] *Bijutsu Hihyo* 19 (March 1953): 47.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Kaido, 17.

⁹⁹ Tono Yoshiaki, "Yellow Race Group Exhibition" *Bijutsu Hihyo* 42 (June 1955): 61.

¹⁰⁰ Tono Yoshiaki, "Hirakareta sozoryoku tozasareta sozoryoku [Open Imagination, Closed Imagination]," *Bijutsu Hihyo* (January 1957): 51; quoted in Yokoyama, 67.

¹⁰¹ Tono, "Open Imagination, Closed Imagination," 52; quoted in Yokoyama, 70-71.

¹⁰² Alexandra Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge: the Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s," *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, 154.

¹⁰³ Critics have discussed the significance of these two art movements in the context of the 1950s in recent years. When the first "Nippon Ten" was held in 1953, the *Genbi* (or *Gendai Bijutsu Kondankai* [Contemporary Art Discussion Group], which later served as a foundation for Gutai in 1954) had its first exhibition in Kansai. See the exhibition catalogue *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan* (1997).

¹⁰⁴ Munroe, "To Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun: The Gutai Group," *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, 83

¹⁰⁵ *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994).

¹⁰⁶ Munroe, "Scream Against the Sky," 22.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ The former, curated by Kaido Kazu was held in Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England in 1985 and the latter, at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris in 1986.

¹⁰⁹ Chiba's *Deviations in Contemporary Art 1945-1985* (Tokyo: Shobunsha, 1986), takes a similar view to Munroe's. Re-examination of realism in the 1950s is a new

development within Japanese art institutions, as evident in the exhibition *Realism in Postwar Japan 1945-1960* in Nagoya City Art Museum in 1998. My thanks to Reiko Tomii for this point.

¹¹⁰ According to an exhibition catalogue, *Demokrato 1951-1957: The Liberation of Art in Postwar Japan* (May 2-30, 1999, at Miyazaki Prefecture Art Museum), Kawara participated its second and third annual shows in Tokyo, which were held from March 30 to April 14, 1953, and from February 8 to 13, 1954 respectively. Kawara left the association in 1955. Kawara was briefly involved with the *Demokurato Bijutsuka Kyokai* [Democratic Artists Association, 1951-1957] before it closed in July 1957, an association that consisted mostly of young artists and critics who bonded with each other by searching for art suitable for the new Japan. The catalyst for this group was artist Ei-Kyu (1911-1960), who suffered through the catastrophic war and pursued his role as a mentor for the next generation. Among the members were Aohara Toshiko, Ay-O, Hayakawa Yoshio, Hosoe Eiko, Ikeda Masuo, Izumi Shigeru, Kato Tadashi, Kubo Teijiro, Miki Hideo, Onosato Toshinobu, Takiguchi Shuzo, Toneyama Kojin, and Yamashiro Ryuichi. See Barbara London, "X: Experimental Film and Video," *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, 297, footnote 2.

¹¹¹ Galleries played an important role in developing post-war art. The art gallery Monami in Higashinakano in eastern Nakano, Tokyo was one of them. It became a nest for the Society of Night and its periodical with the same title, and the group Art Craft (established in 1954). Participating in the numerous meetings of the groups were writers such as Murai Masashige, Kawabata Minoru, Onchi Koshiro, Komaki Gentaro, Furusawa Iwami, Namba Tatsuki, and Horiuchi Masakazu. Among architects was Kenzo Tange; among participating critics, Takiguchi Shuzo, Uemura Takachiyo, Hariu Ichiro, Segi Shinichi, Higashino Yochiaki, and Nakahara Yusuke. When the place was at a peak in 1955, the total number of participants including numerous young artists reached eighty. This indicates how much young artists were thirsty for up-to-date information and feedback from one another.

¹¹² Ikeda, 206-7.

According to Ikeda, Sato Gallery opened in April 1955 and featured group shows of young painters before the owner of the gallery, Sato Yotaro, closed it in April 1981. The gallery also published a magazine, *The Monthly Magazine of Sato Gallery*, edited by the painter Akira Baba. See Ikeda, 207 and also *Akira Baba and Sato Gallery's Artists*, (Akita, Japan: The Akita Museum of Modern Art, 2001).

¹¹³ Among the foreign invitees were Karel Appel, Jean Dubuffet, Fautrier, San Francis, Lucio Fontana, Adolf Gottlieb, Hans Hartung, Willem de Kooning, Willfredo Lam, Georgiu Mathieu, Kay Sage, Mark Tobey, Victor Vasarely and etc. The show was sponsored by Asahi Newspaper, Institute of Modern Art and the Art Club.

¹¹⁴ Yorozuki Yasuhiro, "Point of Creation: Trends of Groups," *Mizue* 920 (January 1981): 55.

¹¹⁵ I would like to thank Reiko Tomii for pointing out this connection.

¹¹⁶ Among the other members were Narahara Ikuo, Tatsuhiko Masugi, Kanda Teizo, Narahara Kazutaka, and Kasu Sanpei etc. There were also 4-6 cooperative members Akutagawa Saori, Ishibashi Kazumi, Maeda Josaku (art), Hani Susumu, Yoshihara Junpei, (film and theater), Sato Tadao (film critic), and Irokawa Taikichi (literature history). See Yorozuki, 55.

¹¹⁷ Kawara wrote two essays for the magazine: "Lyric and Drama," *Realism* No. 4 (Spring 1956); and "Regarding My Method," *Realism* 10. See Yorozuki, 55.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Yamada, July 20, 2001. The members mounted group exhibitions in these cities to reach other young artists in the local cities. See Yorozuki, 55.

¹¹⁹ "Towards New Images of Human Beings," 51.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ His pencil drawings were from the beginning intended as completed works, not as preliminary works for a painting.

¹²⁴ Yamada Satoshi, "On Kawara's Pencil Drawing Series—the Content and the Form of Painting," *On Kawara 1954, 1954, 1956, Naito Rei 1996* (Nagoya City Art Museum, 1996), 25.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Nakahara Yusuke, "Kawara's Early Two Series," *Gendi-no Me* [Eye of the Modern] 320 (July, 1981): 6.

¹²⁷ It is notable that Kawara believed that tradition has something to offer to artists seeking a new art. He argued in the 1955 discussion that "tradition is not the one that has existed in Japan since the Meiji Restoration...when I speak of discovering something in the past... I mean to see the relation between nationalistic, cultural and natural traditions, and legacy of painting in Japan." Quoted from "Towards New Images of Human Beings," 45-46.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹³⁰ Currently the series is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. The Museum framed individual drawings in order to make them efficient to display and store.

¹³¹ Yokoyama, 60-61.

Yokoyama argues that Kawara uses a technique common in Renaissance painting, that is, depicting the main drama in the foreground and a less important scene in the background, both of which are not necessarily related to each other.

¹³² Kikuhata Mokuma, "Inscription of Emptiness," *Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 39. He also mentioned *Kyodatsu* [emptiness] (1948), *Haisen-gunzo* [defeated group] (1948); Tsuruoka Masao, *Omoi-te* [heavy hand] (1949); Asao Saburo, *Hitori* [one man] (1950) for this type of painting. A recent article in English illuminates the significance of the body in postwar Japanese oil paintings: See Bert Winther-Tamaki, "Oil Painting in Postsurrender Japan: Reconstructing Subjectivity through Deformation of the Body," *Monumenta Nipponica* 58 (Autumn 2003): 347-96.

¹³³ Kikuhata, "Inscription of Emptiness," 39. Kawara's interest in tactility, first noted by Miura Masashi ("On Date Painting," *On Kawara* (Tokyo: Gatodo Gallery, 1986), n.p.), was also pointed out by Minemura, who finds a similarity in paintings by Iida Yoshikuni and Imai Toshimitsu and in sculptures by Shusaku Arakawa, Miki Tomio, and Kudo Tetsumi. See Minemura Toshiaki, "The Realism of Tactility: Another Japan That Erupted," *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan* (Tokyo: Tama Art University, 1997), 54. I discuss Arakawa's sculptures further in Chapter Two.

¹³⁴ The *senshu-ha*, or war generation is characterized as lacking the self-confidence found in the prewar generation. The so-called "Third Generation of New Writers (Daisan no shinjin)" such as Kojima Nobuo, Shimao Toshio, Yasuoka Shotaro, and Endo Shusaku came to follow and at the same time dismantle *shishosetsu*'s life in autobiographical fiction tradition. They focused on the first-person narrator "I's" meaning of existence in everyday life. See Van C. Gessel, *The Sting of Life: Four Contemporary Japanese Novelists* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 5.

¹³⁵ The story was published in *Gunzo* in March 1947.

¹³⁶ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 157-58.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Arthur G. Kimball, *Crisis in Identity and Contemporary Japanese Novels* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1973), 20.

¹³⁹ Kimball, 26.

¹⁴⁰ Buruma, 51-2.

¹⁴¹ Kimball, 33.

¹⁴² *Fires on the Plain*, trans. Ivan Morris (New York: Knopf, 1967), 172; quoted in Kimball, 33.

¹⁴³ Picasso's *Guernica* created an international following both in Europe and non-European countries in mid-twentieth century, when colonial and political conflicts were widespread in the countries struck by World War II.

¹⁴⁴ Kawara's respect of Léger is evident not only in these mechanized figures, but also in a short essay written immediately after Léger's death. In the essay, entitled "Léger's Time," Kawara pays homage to the European artist who yearned for a utopia for workers. See Kawara, "Léger's Time," *Bijutsu Hihyo* 45 (September 1955): 46-7.

¹⁴⁵ Gessel, 51.

¹⁴⁶ Masao Miyoshi, *Accomplice of Silence: The Modern Japanese Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), xii.

¹⁴⁷ Miyoshi, xiii.

¹⁴⁸ Hariu Ichiro, "Kawara On *The Bathroom*: Japan Art Society's Independent," *Bijutsu Techo* 93 (April 1955): 83.

¹⁴⁹ Nakahara Yusuke, "*Mishitsu no kaiga* [Pictures of Locked Rooms]," *Bijutsu Hihyo* (June 1956): 20-30.

¹⁵⁰ Nakahara Yusuke, "Kawara On's Two Serieses," *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964): 68.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Nakahara Yusuke, "Kawara's Early Two Series," *Gendi-no Me* [Eye of the Modern] 320 (July 1981): 6.

Kawara, according to him, focused on formal elements more than other "closed room" painters whose interest was in tragic quality of the scene. This essay is what Nakahara wrote looking back the 1950s in addition to his essay of 1964.

¹⁵³ Hariu, "Kawara On *The Bathroom*: Japan Art Society's Independent," 83.

¹⁵⁴ Takiguchi, "Trends Among the Newcomers," 33; quoted in Yokoyama, 62.

¹⁵⁵ Hariu Ichiro, *Sengo bijutsu seisui shi* [Vicissitudes of Postwar Art] (Tokyo: Tokyo Shobo, 1979).

¹⁵⁶ See endnote no. 28.

¹⁵⁷ Yokoyama, 64.

¹⁵⁸ Two or multiple-point perspective is used in drawings numbered 6, 8, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22. In these drawings, the multiple perspectives distort the room maximizing the effect of moral and emotional rupture in the scene of murder.

¹⁵⁹ Yokoyama, 60.

¹⁶⁰ Kawara, "Symmetry in Pictures," 58; quoted in Yokoyama, 66.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Yokoyama, 59; he wrote, "So important is this space that I dare say no other artist in the history of Japanese modern art has ever succeeded in depicting space in such a unique way. I will never forget the initial impact when I saw one painting from *The Bathroom* series in an art gallery. The odd angles and weird placement of figures made it difficult for me to determine the spatial boundaries of the walls, floors, or ceilings."

Contradictory to his argument, Yokoyama suggested in the same essay that Kawara combined a "new perspective" that came from his "intuitive grasp of European perspective's logical core" and a "deformation of space" that is often evoked in traditional Japanese handscrolls such as the twelfth-century *Jigoku-zoshi* [Scrolls of hell]. Kawara's adaptation of a traditional source, according to Yokoyama, is not deliberate or intentional but unconsciously done. See page 69.

¹⁶⁴ Like many postwar writers, Mishima Yukio often created figures who used sexuality to escape from or compensate for chaos and loss. His *Forbidden Colors* (1951-53) is "an epic novel which portrays the world of homosexuals" in Japan as Kawara once wrote in his *Conjunctive Mood--A Project for Printed Painting* (1962) published in *Bijutsu Techo* (April 1965, 37-38).

Kawara remembers a scene by Mishima in which "a naked couple eats in the bed." Mishima's sensational *Forbidden Colors* was later danced by the Butoh dancer Hijikata, with whom Kawara associated. The main story concerns an aging writer Shunsuke who tries to take revenge against the women who once rejected him. Shunsuke befriends a beautiful young homosexual Yuichi whom he later uses to seduce the women for revenge.

Mishima was nominated three times for a Nobel Prize but after many successful and productive years, he turned into a supporter of the extreme right-wing. In 1968, he

founded the Shield Society, a private army of one hundred young men dedicated to a revival of Bushido, the samurai knightly code of honor. In 1970 he seized a military headquarters in Tokyo, trying to rouse the nation to pre-war nationalist heroic ideals. After the attempt failed, he committed suicide in 1970.

¹⁶⁵ Susan J. Napier, *Escape from the Wasteland: Romanticism and Realism in the Fiction of Mishima Yukio and Oe Kenzaburo* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1991), 58.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁶⁸ Kaido, 17

¹⁶⁹ Yamada, "On Kawara's Pencil Drawing Series—the Content and the Form of Painting," 25.

¹⁷⁰ Kawara once confessed that he divided it into three parts in order to fit his work onto the three walls of Hibiya Gallery, where he had a solo show in 1954. See Yokoyama, 63: "Seeing that the center wall was higher than those on either side, he started with the central pictures of the series to accommodate the display space. But he came down with dysentery before he could finish the series and was confined to a hospital isolation ward. Kawara allegedly completed the first and last parts of the series after he was well on the way to recovery. For this reason, the chronological order of objects in the first and last parts of the series is similar."

¹⁷¹ Yamada, "On Kawara's Pencil Drawing Series—the Content and the Form of Painting," 25.

¹⁷² Makoto Ueda, ed., *The Mother of Dreams and Other Short Stories: Portrayals of Women in Modern Japanese Fiction* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1986), 14.

¹⁷³ Gessel, 68.

¹⁷⁴ Eto Jun's 1965 essay, "*Seijuku to soshitsu: "Haha" no hokai* [Maturity and Loss: The Collapse of the "Mother"]." He discusses the role reversals of mothers and fathers in postwar literature. See Gessel, 68-70.

¹⁷⁵ The story was published serially in *Shincho* from July to October 1947.

¹⁷⁶ Napier, 75-76.

¹⁷⁷ Mishima, *Thirst for Love*, trans. Alfred H. Marks (New York: Knopf, 1969), 197.

¹⁷⁸ Gessel, 196-202.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 201.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ The *Death Mask* series was reproduced as limited editions under the title *Thanatophanies* in 1995 by Parco Co. in Tokyo.

¹⁸² Yamada, “On Kawara’s Pencil Drawing Series—the Content and the Form of Painting,” 25.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Weintraub, 57.

¹⁸⁵ Yamada, “On Kawara’s Pencil Drawing Series—the Content and the Form of Painting,” 25.

¹⁸⁶ Yokoyama, 67.

¹⁸⁷ Yamada Satoshi, “Contemplation – On Kawara and Naito Rei,” *On Kawara 1954, 1954, 1956, Naito Rei 1996*, 11.

¹⁸⁸ “Towards New Images of Human Beings,” 49.

¹⁸⁹ Okamoto Taro (1911-1996) had been active as an artist since his participation in the exhibition “Abstraction-Creation” in the 1930s. He later advocated for the Surrealist movement in Japan, and exhibited in the 1938 International Surrealism Exhibition in Paris. However, when World War II intensified, he was drafted in 1942 to serve in China. After the war, he returned to art in 1947 and began to influence young artists profoundly, calling for a new Japanese art that would break away from traditional art and established systems. In 1947, he founded the “Club of Japanese Avant-Garde Artists” with Abe Nobuya (1913-1971) and others. In 1948, he founded “*Yoru no kai* [Evening Society]” with literary figures such as Hanada Kiyoteru and Abe Kobo in order to search for a new art by destroying genre boundaries. His “polarization” theory paved the way for postwar Japanese art, specifically postwar Surrealist art. He argued that rationalism and irrationalism functioned as two significant ideological “poles” in twentieth century art. Identifying with only one of the two axes would not secure a successful work. Between the “theoretical aesthetics” of rationalism and the “dream and madness of the imagination” of irrationalism, artists, he urged, should “come to grips with reality.” (see Okamoto, *Polarization*, 1948; in Matsumoto Toru, “Japanese Art in the 1950s and 60s: Surrounded by a Transparent Wall,” *Japanese Modern Art: Painting from 1910 to 1970*, ed. Irmtraud Schaarschmidt-Richter [Zurich: Edition Stemmler, 2000], 67-68.) His call is

now seen to have resulted in a new combination of rationalism in abstract painting and irrationalism in Surrealism in the postwar art. See also Murayama Yasuo, "Japan/I Torn Apart," *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan*, trans. Reiko Tomii (Tokyo: Tama Art University, 1997), 17.

¹⁹⁰ Kawara argued in the 1955 discussion: "I am against the idea that we put matter in opposition to us, which Okamoto supports. We should feel something when we relate to matter... Okamoto's approach to material is to make something creative within the material. Nowadays, Okamoto's work assumes more socialist meaning but his approach assumes more aesthetic factors. I think this is his limit. Okamoto's approach does not take creative moments from individual life, but rather draws creative moments from general situations... Okamoto remains in the category of abstract painting. I strongly feel that his kind of approach is now facing a vigorous contest." See "Towards New Images of Human Beings," 49. Translated by Kumagai Naoko and the author.

¹⁹¹ He argued, "In the western world, after the Industrial Revolution, they had historically clear steps of progress. It was a kind of smooth, historical flow but makes a contrast to Japanese modernism. We never completed their kinds of clear steps... we still have feudalistic mind and system in our society. In Japan, historically, various steps have been accumulated; it's not a one-way, effortless, historical flow. Western way of one-dimensional view is not enough for us. We need a method to accept actively the accumulated and contradicted reality... Otherwise, we cannot reform our own reality." See "Towards New Images of Human Beings," 47. Translated by Kumagai Naoko and the author.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁹³ Kawara actively started to make his opinions public in published forms in 1955, the same year that he participated in founding the Producers' Discussion Group. Among his essays are "Evaluating the Mexican Art Exhibition," *Bijutsu Hihyo* (October 1955): 28-29; "Absentee," *Bijutsu Techo* (May 1956): 80-81; "Symmetry in Painting," in "Remarks by New Artists: Seven Participants of 'Today's New Artists,'" *Bijutsu Techo* (March 1956): 58; "Something Must Be Done," in special issue "Where are Paintings Going?—Contributions of 32 Modern Avant-Garde Artists," *Bijutsu Hihyo* (January 1957): 26-27; "Questions on Original One Painting," *Bijutsu Techo* (April 1958); "Insatsu kaiga [Printed Painting]," *Bijutsu Techo*, special issue (March 1959): 82-126.

He recognized early on the potential of an alliance formed by artists working in different genres to communicate with a mass public, and he recognized how effective popular magazines and journals could be in reaching a wider audience. Between 1955 and 1959, Kawara produced prolific accounts of his perspectives on art. This remains the only time he ever pursued conventional modes of writing. Kawara's writings reflect the flourishing group of artists' writings in post-war Japan. This is partly due to the birth of two important art magazines, *Bijutsu Techo* and *Bijutsu Hihyo*. These periodicals steadily provided readers with exhibition news, artists' writings, and discussions by artists. Opportunities to contribute to the magazines were open to artists as well as to

professional critics. Many young artists including Kawara were invited to send their essays or to respond to specific questions. Interviews and discussions were often available as a forum for young artists, who would have an opportunity to be exposed to the readers. Before the war, discussions and interviews were not common in art publications. Magazines like *Atelier* and *Mizue* focused on announcements of exhibitions and regular contributions from art critics writing for a popular audience. Speaking via non-art media was a new trend begun in the 1950s by young artists who were armed with theories. (Both of the pre-war journals resumed publishing in 1946 but lost circulation to postwar art periodicals, which dominated the art world throughout the 1950s and 1960s.)

¹⁹⁴ Kawara, "Yomiuri Independent Exhibition," *Bijutsu Techo* (May 1956): 80; quoted in Yokoyama, 55.

¹⁹⁵ Kawara, "Absentee," 80-81.

¹⁹⁶ Kawara, "Yomiuri Independent Exhibition," 55.

¹⁹⁷ Kawara, "Absentee," 80-81.

¹⁹⁸ Kawara, "Something Must Be Done," 27.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² "Critical Reportage: Examining the Mass and the Tableau," *Bijutsu Techo* 142 (June 1958): 36.

²⁰³ A discussion by Hariu Ichiro and Wada Ito, "On Issues of the 1958 Art World," *Bijutsu Techo* 151 (Winter 1958): 10-11.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ "Critical Reportage: Examining the Mass and the Tableau," 36.

²⁰⁶ Takiguchi, "Trends Among the Newcomers," 33; quoted in Yokoyama, 68.

²⁰⁷ Okabe, 353.

Shinohara gained a reputation as an avant-garde artist through his associations with the Neo-Dada Organizers group around 1961. See Chapter Two for more details about this group and other Japanese avant-gardes in the 1960s.

²⁰⁸ Kawara mentioned how he learned printing techniques during a conversation with the author on March, 2002.

²⁰⁹ His inspiration seems to be not *ukiyo-e* but Chinese woodblock prints from the 1940s, which were often shown in Japan in the 1950s. Yamada suggested the idea during an interview with the author on July, 2001.

²¹⁰ From Kawara's ad printed in the final pages of *Bijutsu Techo* 142 (June 1958): u.p.

²¹¹ The comments appeared in *Bijutsu Techo* 141 (May 1958) (Takiguchi Shuzo); *Bijutsu Techo* 149 (Fall, 1958) special edition (Ehara Jun); and *Bijutsu Techo* 150 (December 1958) (Nakahara Yusuke).

For Uemura Takachiyo, "Exhibition Review: 10th Yomiuri Independents," *Bijutsu Techo* 141 (May 1958): 90. See also "Kaiga no giho to kaiga no yukue [Painting Technique and the Future of Painting]," *Bijutsu Techo* (April 1959): 7-36.

²¹² Kawara, "Printed Painting," 82-126.

²¹³ Kawara, "The Meaning and the Directions of the Questionnaire," *Bijutsu Techo*, special edition, (Spring 1959): 93-94. Translated by Hiroshige Ari under commission by the author.

²¹⁴ In a conversation with the author in July 2002, he said he does not own one.

²¹⁵ Yamada, "On Kawara's Pencil Drawing Series—the Content and the Form of Painting", 25.

There is no list of private collectors who have Kawara's "printed paintings." The private collector I managed to meet was a close friend of Kawara's in the 1950s.

²¹⁶ The date is from Ikeda, *Dream*, 242.

²¹⁷ Takiguchi, "Trends Among the Newcomers," 33; quoted in Yokoyama, 68.

²¹⁸ The Nihon Independent had been an open forum for artists who were influenced by the Communist Party since 1947. The unjuried annual exhibition was organized by the Nihon Bijutsu Kyokai [Japan Art Association]. Embodying post-war democratic ideals, the exhibition was considered as heralding a new type of open admissions exhibition in Japan.

²¹⁹ Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge: the Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s," 154.

²²⁰ Hariu, "The Phases of Neo-Dada in Postwar Art," *Neo-Dada in Japan 1958-1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of "White House*, Oita City Board of Education, Japan, 1998, p.276. This essay looks back at his essay in *Mizue* (January 1957). Hariu's shift of position is reflective of the changing ideas and attitudes of the time. As I will discuss further in Chapter Two, the years after 1957 were dominated by young artists, who pursued non-conventional media such as performances and installations.

²²¹ *Ibid.* My note in the bracket.

²²² Nakajima Michihiro, "International Exchange and Individual Stage: Tracing Major Exhibitions," *Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 47.

²²³ Imai Toshimitsu, who was living in Paris at the time, introduced Okamoto to Tapié. Tapié had recognized the potential in Japan already when he saw the works of Gutai Group and finally decided to visit Japan in the fall of 1957. See Chapter Two for more details.

²²⁴ "Where are Paintings Going?—Contributions of 32 Modern Avant-Garde Artists)," *Bijutsu Hiho* (January 1957): 27.

²²⁵ Ikeda, "For Venus; In What Direction Will Painting Go?" *Bijutsu Hiho* (January 1957); quoted in Ikeda, *Dream*, 248-49.

²²⁶ Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge: the Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s," 154

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

As the counterpart of Nihon Independent, Yomiuri Independent annually provided an open un-juried forum for young artists from 1949 to 1963, which was held at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

²²⁹ Hariu, "The Phases of Neo-Dada in Postwar Art," 276. Many avant-garde groups that established their names through the Yomiuri Independent exhibitions after 1958 could be said to have been affected by this impact: among them were Kyushu School (*Kyushu-ha*), Neo-Dada Organizers, Group Ongaku, Zero-Dimension group, Time School (*Jikan-ha*), and Hi Red Center.

Kyushu-ha was based in Fukuoka and founded in 1957. Its members were diverse from poets, Socialists and artists gathered around Sakurai Takami (b.1928), Ochi Osamu (b.1936), Matano Mamoru (b.1914), and Ishibashi Yasuyuki (b.1930). They initially had interest in social issues such as coal-mining and agriculture, similar to Reportage Painters. Later the members began to integrate discarded objects and debris into their work as a critique of modernization.

²³⁰ Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge: the Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s," 150.

²³¹ Ikeda, 257.

CHAPTER 2

TOKYO-NEW YORK

To New York

After two years of meandering from Mexico to New York City and from New York to Europe, Kawara came back to New York and found his living base in the winter of 1964 to 1965.¹ The city would become his long-term base and a source of his ideas, although he would continue to leave regularly. It was during his first stay in 1962 that he was captivated by the urban, cosmopolitan lifestyle available in Manhattan.² After his relatively quiet life in Mexico, he found New York dynamic and appealing. Although he had originally planned merely to stop in New York on his way to Paris, he ended up staying for close to nine months. During this time, he met Ay-O and other Japanese artists and was exposed to the burgeoning New York art world. He particularly liked underground films. He regularly went to the Bleecker Street cinema on Monday nights, after midnight. It was also at this time that he encountered events or Happenings that explored multi-dimensional forms of art. In the evenings, he would play chess at Figaro, a well-known café on Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village.³

After returning to New York from Europe in late 1964, he resumed his urban life and envisioned long-term projects. It was on the streets of New York that he first conceived the date painting works, one of his signature projects.⁴ The inspiration came to him after painstaking experiments with modes of communication throughout his period of wandering. He created more than half of the date paintings in New York while producing the rest during his travels.⁵ Along with his date painting series and the journals

that accompany them, he formulated *I Read*, the first of his three “I” projects. The former was the source of his later “I” series such as *I Met*, bringing up names of people Kawara met during the day.⁶ In New York, he set up a career plan involving several simultaneous projects that he would be able to work on for the rest of his life. Although Kawara had to attend school—he chose the Brooklyn Museum Art School—in order to maintain his visa status, he remained highly productive in the city that offered him unbounded liberty, streamlining all of his works into multiple series.⁷

New York was rapidly becoming a mecca for contemporary art in the 1960s as the infrastructure of the present-day American art world was then being constructed. Museums and exhibition spaces rapidly appeared all over North America.⁸ Some well-known artists’ names, such as Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol, were circulated like those of celebrities. “Blockbuster” shows began to draw large crowds to the museums. Art magazines such as *Artforum* played a stronger role than ever in preserving certain ideas or disseminating art news.⁹ In New York, diverse venues were created for the production, distribution, promotion, display and consumption of art, gradually institutionalizing an entirely new art world.

The new status of the city was achieved due to diverse factors, including a strong economy, and an increase in the art audience. One more factor, according to Edward F. Fry, was New York’s fostering of new styles such as Abstract Expressionism and later movements.¹⁰ In 1971, Fry argued that New York’s status as art “capitol” was not only the result of commercial facilities for marketing of the new avant-garde art, but also of “stylistic innovations” that the city nurtured.¹¹ Fry suggested, in a rather triumphant tone, that formal achievements, rather than ideological and political factors, contributed to the

formation of New York as the capitol of art. International artists frequently visited New York, or settled down, encouraged by its dynamic and nurturing environment. Through encounters and exchanges in the city, artists from all over the world began to glimpse the possibility of having a common arena in which they could communicate and share ideas about art without any obstacles, although the consequences of the new concentration of contemporary art in this exclusively English-speaking place may result in an “involuntary form of cultural imperialism,” similar to the one that Paris had exerted since the late 19th century.¹² Many, however, including Lawrence Alloway, predicted that an international art was bound to happen, not just because art eventually spreads through all available distribution channels, but also because postwar affluence, especially in the U.S. in the 1960s, helped people afford more speed and information than before, as airplanes and mass media enabled people to cross national boundaries faster.¹³ Internationalism, in terms of both ideological bonding and the crossing of boundaries, became inevitable in New York, attracting artists with diverse national identities.

In the city, Kawara met and married Hiraoka Hiroko, another Japanese artist, with whom he still lives.¹⁴ Their one-year-long honeymoon to Central and South America, from spring of 1968 to spring of 1969, was conceived in New York and also ended there.¹⁵ On the streets and in the studios of the East Village, he associated and argued with Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, Dan Graham, Carl Andre and other artists who were working in a similar trajectory and from similar beliefs that art should go beyond simple object making.¹⁶ He had artist neighbors, Yayoi Kusama and Claes Oldenburg.¹⁷ He associated with Ay-O, Nam June Paik, Yoko Ono, Shigeko Kubota, Kasper König, and other international artists all of whom were drawn to the city for

similar reasons as Kawara.¹⁸ He had an apartment and a studio in the East Village from January 1966 until he left for his one-year honeymoon in April 1968.¹⁹ During his extensive traveling outside New York, from 1972 to 1977, he did not have a permanent space in the city but always managed to come back to Manhattan, where most of his belongings were in storage.²⁰ He occasionally went to artists' Happenings and performances, magnetic places for meeting and gathering.²¹ These meetings and encounters influenced his growing convictions that departure from traditional figurative art was necessary and crucial and that staying in and/or responding to New York could be critical to contemporary art.

Kawara's answer to the question, "why did you choose New York for your base?" was that he was able to find a spacious and affordable studio there.²² However, Kawara's acquaintances or people who spoke with him affirm that "for anyone familiar with On Kawara's past, it is difficult to take this claim at face value."²³ It is probable that Kawara was lured by the city's support and embrace of artists from diverse backgrounds. By the time Kawara came back to New York in 1965, the city was then known as an incubator of the New York School of abstract painting after the war, and was fostering other avant-garde art movements such as Pop Art and Minimalism. Documentary photographs and his actual works reveal that Kawara was having a productive time in New York between 1965 and 1968. It was in the city that his consistent struggle with art as communicative mode finally became resolved. Unfortunately, Kawara destroyed, probably out of frustration, some of his projects that included codes and words in New York, specifically many of the code paintings (Fig. 93). Even Japanese critics agree that Kawara's breakthrough into Conceptual works was possible only in "the tradition-free environment

unique to the United States,” not in his home country.²⁴ Kawara found that the dynamic and “culturally neutral” locale in the newly burgeoning art world in the East Village and SoHo.²⁵

From Tokyo to New York

Kawara’s arrival in New York coincided with an influx of other Japanese artists, made possible by the lifting of the ban on traveling at the end of the Occupation in 1952 and the economic stabilization of the early 1960s. There were over one hundred Japanese artists living in the city in the 1960s and 1970s, according to a 1972 study by Mary Hale Bereday, “Japanese Artists in New York City.”²⁶ These included many of the new avant-garde artists such as Shusaku Arakawa, Yayoi Kusama, Yoko Ono, and Shigeko Kubota. This population, paralleled by the renewed postwar emphasis on internationalism, eventually led to an unprecedented exchange between Japan and New York. Beginning with the Gutai Group (1954-1972)’s effort to make a bridge with the Euro-American art world under the leadership of Yoshihara Jiro, the postwar Japanese have endeavored to increase their contact with the outside world, especially by joining the new crossroads of artists in the U.S., throughout the 1960s and right up until the present.²⁷ Thus, the remarkable presence of Japanese artists in the landscape of avant-garde art in New York needs to be explored further, both in terms of how it happened and how it affected the history of art at the time.

Yoshida Minoru, one of the Japanese artists in New York, described in 1972 his fellow Japanese artists as falling into three groups.²⁸ The first group included established artists born before 1920. Kenzo Okada (1902-82) and Teiji Takai (b.1911) belonged to

this first category. Both had come to New York in the 1950s and became successful producing abstract art that fused Japanese aesthetic ideas with oil painting techniques. The second group was the “middle range artists not currently famous in Japan but well-established in New York,” and the third group was the “third generation” avant-garde artists who had emerged and become prominent in the Yomiuri Independent exhibitions.²⁹ The second and third groups overlapped each other. It should be noted, however, that not all of the Japanese artists who became prominent in New York’s avant-garde art scene of the 1960s belonged to these categories.

Among the various avant-garde art groups of post-war Japan, the short-lived Neo-Dada Organizers (1960-61) is probably the only group whose members escaped to New York in large numbers.³⁰ Neither its predecessor, the Gutai Group, nor its later descendent, the High Red Center (1963-64), attempted to leave Japan permanently, even though they achieved success in both Europe and the U.S.³¹ Political and fame-seeking, the Neo-Dada Organizers created sensational performances in Tokyo, ranging from Shinohara Ushio’s “boxing painting” to screaming and shouting.³² Calling for an aggressive, offensive art against tradition, they attempted to enter “the ring on an Earth gone mad” like “slaughterers,” to resolve all problems with an atomic bomb-like explosion.³³ Although the Neo-Dada Organizers never had direct contact with the American neo-Dadaists, such as Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, in spite of their adoption of the name ‘neo-dada’ as an homage to their U.S. counterparts, the members never lost their longing for New York, a city of post-war avant-gardes.³⁴ Most of the members of the Neo-Dada Organizers came to New York between 1961 and 1969 and chose to stay there permanently, beginning with Arakawa’s arrival in 1961 and ending

with Shinohara's in 1969.³⁵ They never reestablished the movement or pursued collective activities in their new home: Arakawa and Shinohara, however, maintained a dadaist attitude in their works by moving on to Duchampian conceptual art and continuing to make assemblages in New York, respectively. The movement espoused "individual enterprise" as initiative which had been temporarily set aside, back in Japan, to realize their goal of destabilizing the concept of art in the face of weakening realism, inspired by *Art Informel*'s abandonment of figuration.³⁶

Fluxus artists from Japan set an unprecedented example in creating international avant-garde art.³⁷ The contact and exchange between Tokyo and New York was indebted to, and coincided with, the city's magnetic attraction for international avant-garde artists. Fluxus activities in Japan began when Toshi Ichianagi, who had been in the John Cage circle in New York, returned to Tokyo and held a concert at Sogetsu Art Center, Tokyo in 1961. Yoko Ono, who associated with New York avant-garde artists after her schooling at Sarah Lawrence College, came soon after, staging performances in Japan when she lived there between 1962 and 1964. Nam June Paik, who originally came from Korea, grew up in Japan, and studied music in Germany, went back to Japan in 1963 to do robotics research. He was by then already friendly with the European Fluxus artists such as Joseph Beuys. Paik attended art events, especially at the Sogetsu Art Center, which had held an Ichianagi concert in 1961, and concerts by John Cage (1962) and David Tudor (1963). These avant-garde music concerts stimulated emerging artists in Japan such as Shigeko Kubota, who eventually moved to New York and joined the New York Fluxus scene led by George Maciunas.³⁸

According to Jon Hendricks's *Fluxus Codex* (1988), twenty-three Japanese artists and critics were active in Fluxus from 1961 to 1978.³⁹ However, it should be noted that this list includes several Japan-based artists who were not directly involved in Fluxus in New York.⁴⁰ The list nevertheless indicates how expansive the movement was. Fluxus accepted more Japanese artists as legitimate partners than any other Euro-American avant-garde art movement leading to a long-term impact on the Japanese art world.⁴¹ Japanese artists were embraced, as Alexandra Munroe explains, as “a collective manifestation of an Eastern sensibility,” which shared similar ideas, such as concerning the power of chance, and an appreciation for minimal practice expressed through simple acts of everyday life.⁴² Fluxus's international banding was unprecedented even in the history of Japanese art. Michel Tapié had attempted to promote Gutai as a branch of Art Informel in the west, but he failed to narrow the gap between the two. In Fluxus, eastern aesthetics, for the first time, found western modern art as a potential outlet for ideas and gestures, paving a way to an equal bonding between the two worlds.

Honma Masayoshi, curator at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, noticed the increasing number of Japanese artists in New York and elsewhere. In November 1965, he organized the *Exhibition of Japanese Artists Abroad, Europe and America*, which included Kawara and his future wife Hiroko, among others.⁴³ As Honma acknowledged in the catalogue essay, young artists were flowing into New York while most of the artists in Paris had already been there for some time.⁴⁴ There was a new attitude among artists that Europe (mainly Paris) was no longer the sole attraction for them, and that New York was increasingly being considered the new center of art. “Why are so many artists, especially the young ones, going to New York?” asked Honma in his catalogue essay. His

answer was that that cosmopolitan New York was being transformed into a world art center after World War II, due to its increased economic power and intense will to catch up with European culture.⁴⁵ The growth of contemporary art in postwar New York, he wrote, was “an astonishing achievement full of young trials and experiments,” including the New York School, Hard Edge, and Optical Art.⁴⁶ Honma estimated that half of Japanese artists residing abroad were in New York in the 1960s. The majority of this newly emerged, large population was comprised of young artists who had lived in the city less than six years, in contrast to the mostly older artists in Paris who had been there since the prewar period. Six years later, Porter McCray of the John D. Rockefeller III Fund, reiterated Honma’s observations. In the late 1950s, “the emigrating Japanese artists went to New York, to Paris, to Rome, to Mexico City. Today they are all in New York.”⁴⁷

Honma took artist Inokuma Genichiro’s case as an example to explain why many young Japanese artists settled in the city.⁴⁸ Inokuma, a promising artist in Japan, stayed briefly in New York on his way to Europe. During his short stay, he ended up joining a gallery, which motivated him to decide to stay long-term in New York. He found New York attractive because it gave him the liberty to work on his own projects, and the professional, “business-like attitude” of the gallery system impressed him. While Inokuma, according to Honma, found the “individualism” and “liberty” of the New York culture enticing after his experience with a Japanese art association, most of the young artists from Japan had not joined any art groups in Japan. Finding a supporting art group had been a typical trend in their mother country for any artist who wanted to make a formal debut in the art world. Unknown and refusing to be associated with any collective activities, these young artists aspired to become independent and successful.

The influx of Japanese artists to New York indicated cultural thirst and a search for a way to liberate the creative urge so strong in the minds of so many young artists in the 1960s. Japan was a country in which contemporary artists were bound to struggle because of the innate conflict between the liberal, progressive nature of postwar art and the constraints of traditional culture. Leaving Japan temporarily or permanently was, therefore, a way to escape from an overtly rigid cultural framework.⁴⁹ Too radical in their home and often misunderstood and frustrated in their home country, the artists needed to seek release of their personalities in the American city, and furthermore, patronage, even fame and wealth. Underlying this expectation was the undying hope for a utopian place that would allow full realization of artistic talent for all.

The Japanese search for cultural inspiration dates back to the Meiji Period (1868-1912), when Japanese artists left for France, Germany, Italy, the United States, and other western industrialized countries to learn new artistic and literary styles or knowledge of western ideas. In the late nineteenth century, western art was one of the tenets of modernity, a model that the Japanese believed would transform Japan into a country based on rationalism and positivism, like its western counterparts. Many artists went to European cities like Paris, Venice, and Munich. These pre-Meiji and Meiji painters included figures such as Kawamura Kiyoo (Venice), Harada Naojiro (Munich), and Kuroda Seiki (Paris), the godfather of Japanese Impressionism.⁵⁰ The postwar exodus was different from the turn of the century flight to Europe. If the early modern artists mainly followed the trend or the imperative of the time to learn about European art as the source of modernity, the postwar artists went to New York to seek the liberty and individualism available in the U.S. This was more a voluntary exodus to an unconstrained

milieu where they believed they would be able to find their voices. While the artists of Meiji period came back to Japan and took pioneering, and pedagogic positions as exemplars of the vanguards of western-style art in Japan, most voluntary exiles of the later period stayed in their foreign cities and assimilated to their new homes.

Japanese artists' long-standing desire to be engaged in art outside Japan is thus inseparably tied to the issue of identity in Japanese art. Art, especially western-style art as engaged by Japanese artists, was a product of the Japanese zeal for modernism of their and aspiration for equality with Euro-American civilizations.⁵¹ The dogma of modernization often pressured artists to invent something modern but uniquely Japanese, since they felt obligated to respond to western art. This history of modern Japanese art as reaction to western art often lingered in the minds of Japanese art professionals when they would establish contemporary Japanese art history. Art historians and curators have argued about how to see particular art movements between the two contexts of Japanese originality and western influence. They often have used the problematic dichotomy between imitation and originality to position contemporary Japanese art. Chiba Shigeo, in *Deviations in Contemporary Art 1945-1985* (1986), published in Japanese, viewed Gutai as first in exploring Japanese identity in forms of art conceived "neither as imitations of the West, nor as returns to tradition, but as explorations and expressions of the possibilities unique to Japanese art."⁵² On the other hand, Neo-Dada Organizers, another significant avant-garde art group, was described as "an extreme populist group influenced by American trends."⁵³ Chiba's bias against art that stood close to trends in the U.S. also applied to Pop art in Japan. He intentionally avoided bringing these art movements into "what is rightly regarded as uniquely Japanese art."⁵⁴

In a 1991 article, Tatehata Akira also set up two major narratives in postwar Japanese art history: one followed western art movements such as *Art Informel*, and the other, art said to be born out of inner necessity such as the Gutai Group and Mono-ha.⁵⁵ He argued that there was a “wall” that separated Japan from the world, a wall that functioned as a boundary and device that measured the originality of a particular art. His first narrative was “a comparative timeline of influences from *Art Informel* on down to *Simulationism*” that the wall allowed in without any hesitation.⁵⁶ The second narrative consisted of arts that the wall incubated inside Japan completely apart from Western concepts of art. Gutai and Mono-ha, Tatehata’s second model, played a major role in the Japanese quest for original art of its own. His viewpoints reflected again the fact that the struggle over how to narrate postwar Japanese art centered on the issue of what Japanese art should be. As he admitted, this kind of argument entails a possibility of polarizing the first category as “cosmopolitan syncretism” or “mere copying,” and the second as “indigenous originality” or “blatant nationalism.”⁵⁷ Tatehata’s dualistic division, however, endangers his own argument by forcing all art into one of the two categories, ignoring the possibility of art occupying multiple positions between the two poles.

The boundary or the “wall” that Tatehata kept holding onto is, in fact, not a fixed entity. It is an invisible fence that postwar artists vigorously challenged, confronted, and abolished. Tatehata’s dichotomy thus worked only to separate Japanese art from the rest of the world and to justify it as such. His emphasis on the Gutai group as “the first association of Japanese artists to overcome the ‘walls’ of their country’s borders”⁵⁸ contrasted with Munroe’s argument that the same group manifested post war Japanese art reflecting the “progressive idealism of American cultural diplomacy in the 1950s.”⁵⁹ Both

Tatehata's and Munroe's arguments reveal a gap in situating postwar Japanese art, a gap created by the question of whether the focus should be on Japan or on the international art world. Further, Tatehata's argument does not explain why so many Japanese artists went to New York and became an integral part of art there in the 1960s and 1970s. For the artists, the "wall" was nothing more than a geographical and cultural borderline that could be dissolved, if not entirely, then whenever they strategically or unintentionally crossed the boundaries.

Tokyo in the 1960s

While New York was in the minds of many avant-garde artists, Tokyo in the 1960s was also blooming with radical and dynamic artists and groups. The spirit of the 1960s is said to begin with the Gutai Group's anarchistic performances and exhibition in 1955 and to end with the emergence of Mono-ha in 1968.⁶⁰ Appearing both in major exhibitions like the Yomiuri Independents and in small-scale shows, these new groups of artists—such as Gutai Group, Neo-Dada Organizers, Hi Red Center, and other independent artists—experimented with ideas and media, rebelling against traditional attitudes and conventions.⁶¹ New genres like abstract art and performance-involved activities gradually prevailed in important annual exhibitions, and new art groups frequently held performances. Once the door was open to vibrant, cross-genre trends, artists employed more daring means that often aimed to shock. They invaded the streets, shopping centers, and train stations of Tokyo beyond the walls of museums and galleries in order to bring art as 'experience,' rather than stressing the conventional elements in art such as the medium or the artist's lineage.⁶² Expressionistic and even explosive, the new generation

of artists sought to blur the borderline between art and living. Refusing conventions and norms imposed by old art institutions, they redefined the notion of “self-identity,” putting overt self-expression at the forefront of Japanese art.⁶³

In a way, MacArthur’s effort to plant the seeds of democracy and individuality contributed to shaping ’60s Japan. The American occupation had provided a nurturing ground for outspoken minds that wished to go beyond the acceptable, traditional social norms. Well fitted to Japan’s need to renew itself, MacArthur, as a symbol of the two important concepts, knowingly and unknowingly encouraged individualism and pluralism in Japan, in ways however limited and localized. His significance as a defender of democracy was evident in Japan’s collective mourning of the loss of MacArthur when the General had to step down from the position of Supreme Commander because of President Truman’s ire over MacArthur’s challenge to the president’s military policy on Chinese troops in the Korean War. NHK radio broadcast live MacArthur’s departure from Haneda Airport and an Asahi Newspaper’s editorial wrote:

When the Japanese people faced the unprecedented situation of defeat, and fell into the *kyodatsu* condition of exhaustion and despair, it was General MacArthur who taught us the merits of democracy and pacifism and guided us with kindness along this bright path. As if pleased with his own children growing up, he took pleasure in the Japanese people, yesterday’s enemy, walking step by step toward democracy, and kept encouraging us.⁶⁴

Despite the Japanese affection and respect for MacArthur, he infuriated the Japanese when, upon his return to the U.S., he compared the country to a twelve-year old boy, “susceptible to following new models, new ideas.”⁶⁵ However, the scandal did not stop Japan from advancing ideas such as democracy and individualism.

If MacArthur played a major role as an outsider in expanding attitudes, two inspirational figures, Takiguchi Shuzo (1908-1979) and Okamoto Taro (1911-1996), tried

to open forums domestically for avant-garde ideas in the art world. Since his enthusiastic introduction of Surrealism in the 1930s and his endurance of suppression under the fascist government in the 1940s, Takiguchi maintained his stature as a guardian of avant-garde art in Japan.⁶⁶ His enthusiastic absorption of western art led him to engage both in theoretical writings and in Surrealist art practices such as decalcomania. After the war, he supported artists as an established critic and curator of Takemi-ya Gallery (1951-1957) in Tokyo, and sometimes as a colleague and collaborator.⁶⁷ Takiguchi encouraged young artists to open their eyes to the international art world, helping them reconsider the identity of Japanese art. If Takiguchi meant to “enlighten” the Japanese audience, Okamoto was influential in formulating the reasoning of new contemporary Japanese art for young artists such as the Neo-Dada Organizers and Hi-Red Center. In addition to his postwar effort to carry on the tradition of Surrealism, he cultivated the perception of the artist as “both seer and leader of revolutionary consciousness.”⁶⁸ Like many major figures in the Japanese art world, he founded several organizations: the Club of Japanese Avant-Garde Artists (1947) with Abe Nobuya (1913-1971) and others, and *Yoru no kai* (Evening Night Society) (1948) with literary figures such as Hanada Kiyoteru and Abe Kobo, in order to search for a new art destroying the boundaries between genres. Okamoto called for a new Japanese art with conviction that the old values and viewpoints should be destroyed to give birth to new art. He denounced established “comfortable” art: “We need to destroy everything with monstrous energy like Picasso’s in order to reconstruct the Japanese art world.”⁶⁹ This *taikyoku shugi* (theory of the extreme contrasts) that Okamoto proposed was “a dialectic melting abstraction, surrealism and dadaism” that became a catalyst for the postwar avant-garde.⁷⁰ His effort to gather young

artists soon turned him into a spiritual leader of artists, a link between the pre-war European avant-garde art and that of postwar Japan.

Exchange with international artists also directly and indirectly spurred the blooming of the avant-garde. Beginning with Michel Tapié in 1957, artists and art figures from Europe and the U.S. continually visited postwar Japan. Tapié had first recognized the potential for franchising *Art Informel* in Japan when he saw the works of the Gutai Group in the group's journal in 1955 offered by Imai Toshimitsu. Tapié finally came to Japan in August of 1957, accompanied by Imai and Mathieu. This visit was followed by other artists such as Sam Francis.

Mathieu's show in Tokyo in 1957 left the Japanese audience in awe and surprise, most of whom were oblivious of what was developing in Paris. The Japanese audiences were fascinated by Mathieu's explosively enacted public demonstrations executed in the display window of the Shirakiya department store. He dressed himself in a *yukata*, a traditional Japanese cotton summer kimono, tied his sleeves with a sash, and wrapped his head with a towel. Mathieu's demonstration of painting, loosely comparable to scenes of Jackson Pollock's "action painting," though with the canvas vertical and not horizontal, provoked a Japanese art world that had already begun to change. Established artists and architects from Europe and elsewhere continued to show in Japan in the 1960s, feeding young emerging artists recent visual trends in the west: Le Corbusier in 1961 at the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo; Paul Klee in October 1961 at the Tokyo National Museum; Picasso's *Guernica* in October 1962 at the National Museum of Western Art; Bernard Buffet in April 1963 at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Arshile Gorky, Aristide Maillol, Rufino Tamayo, Marc Chagall in 1963.

The Yomiuri Independent Exhibition provided a nest for all the rebellious ideas and attitudes of this so-called “third generation,” who emerged after the realist artists of the “second generation” and the Surrealists of the immediate postwar “first generation.”⁷¹ Between 1957, when the annual exhibition introduced Art Informel, and 1963, the last exhibition of the Independent, various artists and groups presented their reaction to and against the dominant avant-garde practices of postwar Japanese art. Their art, called “anti-art” (*han-geijutsu*) by art critic Tono Yoshiaki (b.1930) in 1960, relied on unconventional and unconstrained works often made of junk and non-art materials.⁷² Among these “anti-artists” were members of the Neo-Dada Organizers. Like Nouveau Realists working simultaneously in France, they took the city as their workspace and the source of materials for their work.⁷³ Also called the “post-Hiroshima generation,” having grown up surrounded by ruins of the war, the new generation finally overcame the realist impulse that former generations had been unable to ignore, and found alternative methods and media to convey their ideas and feelings.⁷⁴ It is ironic that audacious, convention-breaking, and even anti-institutional works that had grown up with the Yomiuri Independent contributed to the closing of this annual exhibition in 1964, after the host institution had tried in vain to regulate the level of the artists’ sensation-seeking strategies.⁷⁵

The 1960s thus saw a new paradigm for artists as they were charged with the task of renewing his/her own art; who would subvert established ways of thinking, seeing and behaving; and who would introduce new forms parallel to the individualistic, independent ideas often found in western art. It is therefore not surprising that the artists maintained an anti-institutional attitude. Although they worked as a group on a small scale, most of

the artists did not choose to join established, traditional organizations. It had been common for a respectable young artist to join an organization, known as *Kobo Dantai* (Open Participation Organizations), in order to make a debut in the art world. Relying on the expertise of the members, new artists would submit works for annual exhibitions known as *Kobo Ten* (Open Participation Exhibitions) before eventually being admitted to membership.⁷⁶ Some of the new generation worked independently, presenting their works only in solo shows or in annual exhibitions such as the Yomiuri and Nihon Independents, which allowed the artists to explore their own styles without feeling obligated to pursue styles that the *Kobo Dantai* imposed. These so-called “*mushozoku sakka*” (unattached artists), along with small-scale avant-garde groups, collectively destabilized the framework of Japan’s art world. They not only set the course of postwar avant-garde art, but also established the model of a contemporary artist who constantly challenged the norms and conventions of Japanese culture to reach out to the world beyond Japan.⁷⁷

The so-called economic miracle of the 1960s made these attempts all the more possible. The entire nation moved beyond poverty, entering a new era comparable to the golden days of the 1920s, when good, cultivated taste backed by economic stability pervaded modern Japanese life. The “Double Your Incomes” policy Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato had begun in 1960 worked successfully, as he had promised the public after blocking protests by labor unions. His policy was conceived to ease public criticisms on constitutional issues after the years of the Occupation. Departing from a leftist, pacifist, neutral Japan, he promised a new Japan that would never be driven into wars and would resist any form of imperialism.⁷⁸ By 1964 when the Tokyo Olympics were held, people in Japan had risen far above the poverty of the 1950s. The Olympics would demonstrate to

the rest of the world that the defeated country had overcome the ruins of the war less than twenty years after Emperor Hirohito had surrendered unconditionally to the Allies.

Visitors to the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics saw a Japan transformed and geared up for a new era that would define it not as a military empire but as an economic empire.⁷⁹

The 1960s, empowered by an average growth rate of eleven percent throughout the decade, can be called "*Showa Genroku*," for its similarity to the sensual culture of the early seventeenth century's Edo merchant class.⁸⁰ The collective energy, channeled into high economic growth, also resulted in a large increase in the middle class citizenry, and a boost to commercialism.⁸¹ By the 1980s, this continuous accumulation of capital had brought Japan the title, as Ian Buruma put it, of "the most commercial, most fashionable, most kitschy country in the world."⁸²

In spite of Tokyo's apparent resemblance to its European or American counterparts as an art center, young artists were not well supported. Benefiting from the fast speed of information transmission, artists in Tokyo were exposed to, and inspired by, news from abroad. While Japan still lacked a proper art patronage system, artists were experimenting and trying to emulate novel genres. William S. Lieberman, a modernist curator at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, took a critical view of the Japanese art world of the 1960s in his catalogue essay for the exhibition *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture* in 1966.⁸³ He argued that Japanese art was unbalanced with an explosion of painting and a far slower growth in sculpture. Despite the bustling and optimistic outlook of art activities in Japanese gallery districts and museum venues such as Ginza, the artists faced a lack of patronage and an absence of a solid commercial infrastructure. Foreign expectations that Tokyo might become a new "international art capital" merely remained

a view from the outside that did not affect the system. Exhibitions were held in department stores as marketing tactics, and promoted by newspaper companies that sought publicity.⁸⁴ In reality, Lieberman wrote in his 1966 catalogue essay, “there are still no more than a dozen private collectors of modern art in Japan, and of these only a few collect works by modern Japanese artists.”⁸⁵ Most permanent collections of public museums were not on view, and private museums such as Ohara Museum and Ishibashi Gallery in Tokyo mostly showed western art. Rather than featuring and supporting artists, galleries were often rented out to artists who wanted to have shows.⁸⁶

After the Olympics, artists looked for international opportunities more than ever. As participation in international exhibitions came to be monopolized by exclusive groups of artists who followed and integrated western art trends, the division deepened between domestically-oriented artists who participated in the art association exhibitions and the internationally-oriented artists.⁸⁷ Many avant-garde artists were frustrated with the lack of domestic patronage and dreamed of traveling out of Japan. Improved opportunities for travel after the peace treaties in 1952 encouraged many artists from well-to-do families to leave Japan and join the new post-war internationalist trend. Fellowships from institutions such as the Japan Society, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Japanese Ministry of Education enabled them to leave Japan. During these days, one of the best compliments one could pay was, “I would not be ashamed to present this work in the West.”⁸⁸ For artists, after more than a decade of being frustrated and suffocated within the “transparent walls” between Japan and the rest of the world, leaving the country was a revolutionary option.⁸⁹

International Artists and International Exhibitions: Search for Identity

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Japanese government also pursued direct contact and involvement with the art world abroad. The revived interest in international ties and competition, often affected by the geopolitics of the Cold War, drove the Japanese government to promote Japan's image as something more than simply a newly reviving country after the war. As the world, caught within the Cold War power struggles, was increasingly being defined as a battlefield between communism and democracy, Japan needed to redefine its own national identity through art, one of the material forms that embodied its national character.⁹⁰ Whether it actively assimilated Western art into native traditions or built its own independent art based on Japanese resources and tradition, postwar Japanese art interacted with, and sometimes competed with, art from other countries, including the U.S. While government-sponsored exhibitions and publications were sent out as cultural packages, artists were sent to international biennials as Japanese representatives. These efforts were not coordinated centrally, but they did have one common goal: to restore Japan's pre-war image as a culturally established country. Along with individual artists' voluntary escape from Japan, the government's active engagement with the presentation of Japanese culture helped to shape the postwar identity of contemporary Japanese art.

It was a time when, in the name of internationalism, many countries voluntarily or involuntarily became involved in a postwar competition over art, as parties to a collective boasting about culture as a supplement or testimony to national power. The large-scale international art exhibitions became fields of competition or spectacle among many countries. Gathering cultural products from multiple countries in one place for a specific

period of time served the purpose of displaying post-war persistence and a renewed sense of identity. Most countries seemed convinced that participating in international exhibitions would demonstrate national power; art was seen as the arena for bonding and exchange among the different states. Sponsoring a national pavilion or sending a few artists to biennials and exhibitions was a way to assert a presence in the international world. Bridging several continents, multinational art expositions like Documenta in Kassel, the São Paulo Bienal, the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh and the Guggenheim International in New York, in addition to the traditional Venice Biennale, created a nest for the birth of “international” art. This was an art close to art coming from Paris or New York, an art potentially accessible to audiences from other countries, though not necessarily accessible to the audience of the country where it originated.⁹¹ The directors of these exhibitions generally aspired to showcase artists from various countries who represented their local contemporary art. Ironically, for these international art institutions, the national identity of the artist played an important role in the selection process.

The postwar interest in the “international” paralleled the hope among artists that “a kind of level playing field” might form “where all works of art from different places would be appreciated equally without reference to their origin.”⁹² Artists increasingly went abroad to see and study postwar art throughout the world, and soon recognized the possibility that contemporary art could communicate cross-culturally regardless of the artist’s original country.⁹³ Abstract art thus gained a wide following among artists as the future of “an internationally viable language of art” that would pursue expression that had no reference to traditional styles.⁹⁴ Alloway suggested that abstraction may have potential

as one of the international styles, which does not insist upon “a globally unified style” yet has “national or regional characteristics.”⁹⁵ There were voices of worry about the identity of art in the “international age,” but they could not stop the pervasive optimism.⁹⁶

The reshaping of the image of Japan as an international country with a distinct cultural heritage started in 1951, when Japan participated in the Sao Paulo Biennale for the first time after the end of World War II. Forty-five artists presented traditional Japanese-style paintings, western-style oil paintings, prints and sculptures.⁹⁷ In 1953, the government organized and exported the *Exhibition of Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, which consisted mainly of traditional art.⁹⁸ The exhibition traveled to various places throughout the U.S. as a cultural package to contribute “something to world culture” and to the cultural liaison between the two countries.⁹⁹ In 1952, Japan participated in the Venice Biennale for the first time after the war.¹⁰⁰ Despite Japan’s prewar experience with the international Italian exhibition and the selection committee’s good efforts, the first postwar participation was not as successful as Japanese artists had hoped.¹⁰¹ Japan borrowed a room in the Italian Pavilion and exhibited works whose colors the Japanese critic Imaizumi Atsuo called “dull, insipid, and unattractive,” works that he said had “too many impurities lying between the conception and the execution” that may have resulted from insecure interpretation of western-style painting.¹⁰² Conscious of how other participating countries would see the Japanese presentations, Takiguchi, who argued in favor of western-style art in the selection committee, was frustrated to see the archaic and naïve Japanese art at the 1952 Venice Biennale. His review article in the Yomiuri Newspaper called for artists to “[f]ace the fact that there was no response” in the Biennale.¹⁰³ As an adamant believer in modern art, he argued:

An international exhibition of this kind in the West has a single orientation, toward modern art. To send the work of two artists like Umehara and Yasui to such an event is, at the very least, dubious. There is also a problem with suddenly jumping out of the bushes with Japanese-style paintings by elderly, established artists. Would it not be better to create an appropriate place to show this sort of work? It is presumptuous of us to ask outsiders to understand both the status quo in Japan and the vigorous action which is being taken against it.¹⁰⁴

As befit his role as a godfather of avant-garde art in Japan, he called for greater enlightenment concerning contemporary world art. He criticized the blind ambition of established artists who just wanted to represent the country despite their narrow understanding of art learned during “an exclusionist, reactionary period.”¹⁰⁵

Contemporary Japanese artists, he wrote, needed to go back to “the path of modernization taken since the Meiji Period” in order to learn the “fundamentals” of western modern art.¹⁰⁶ The search for “a new Japanese art,” he concluded, should necessarily rely on interacting with “developments in the rest of the world” in order for the results not to be “treated as a local or regional art.”¹⁰⁷

Despite challenges by an opposition which felt that the unique quality of the Japanese tradition would catch western attention, Takiguchi’s view was shared by many art critics and artists who also believed that Japan needed to reshape its postwar cultural face beyond *kabuki* and *ukiyo-e*. His voice in the end had a tremendous influence on the presentation of postwar Japanese art. Beginning with the 1954 Venice Biennale, Japan sent western-style painters; that year, Sakamoto Hanjiro and Okamoto Taro represented Japan. During the 1956 Biennale, the Japanese Pavilion was opened, designed by the architect, Yoshizaka Takamasa. In 1960, for the thirtieth Venice Biennale, Japan finally adopted a commissioner system in which one person would select artists for the international exhibition.¹⁰⁸ Regular governmental participation in international

exhibitions and biennials began as these events once again emerged as arenas in which an individual country could show off its contemporary cultural assets. Japanese art and artists were consistently featured in biennials in Venice, São Paulo, New York and Paris. These regular showings of Japanese art, as I will discuss later, influenced museums and cultural institutions in those cities to feature contemporary Japanese art more frequently.

Takiguchi's argument revealed how Japanese modernists understood the concept of being international during the immediate postwar period, especially in the 1950s. European or American art was presumed to be the central axis of internationalism. For the Japanese modernists, their country, a former empire, was in a state of cultural deflation after the war, and needed to rejoin the international exhibitions to get closer to the centers of world art. For non-western countries, the term "international" meant embracing the already established canons of western art exhibitions. To participate on "equal" terms, it was necessary to recognize and follow the course of modern western art that had been shaping exhibitions in the west. If pre-war Japan was engaged in westernization in the name of modernization, post-war Japan aspired to be 'western' in pursuit of internationalism. It should be noted, however, that this aspiration toward internationalism turned in a different direction in the 1960s, as the exchange between the two worlds became more frequent, and enabled Japanese artists to invent their own avant-garde language without simulating the counterpart's.

The word "international" implied something different in the U.S. or Europe, where the term "international artist" was often used to refer to artists "outside traditional art centers who were perceived as working in styles similar to those originating in New York or Paris."¹⁰⁹ The proliferation of biennials and internationals would create art awards

carrying with them preeminent national and international prestige, as foundation president Harry F. Guggenheim wrote in 1964, as a “manifestation of international good will” on the part of the west.¹¹⁰ As much as the international forums were seen as promoting “good will” toward non-western or non-Euro-American countries, the equal coexistence of art from the diverse corners of the world remained a mere hope for the non-central countries that wished to join these exhibitions. While non-westerners such as Takiguchi spoke to the need to overcome regionalism, the selection committees of the international shows considered the national origin of an artist to be significant. The format of exhibitions such as the Guggenheim International and the São Paulo Bienal was often determined by their need to distribute entries among as many countries as possible.

The Euro-American attitude was thus not much different from that of the previous colonial age, in which many European countries had sought to enlighten the non-westernized. The postwar “international” occurred in a contested field in which the European or American art establishment condescendingly invited artists from relatively unprivileged countries who directly emulated or successfully digested art from the west. Edward Fry, then the curator of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, in his essay for the catalogue of the 1971 Guggenheim International—in which Kawara was invited as a representative artist of Japan along with Takamatsu Jiro—illustrated this attitude when he wrote, “[i]f marked on a globe of the world, all the recognized centers of innovative contemporary art would be clustered in western Europe and eastern North America.”¹¹¹ Written before Fry was fired from the Guggenheim Museum right after the International in 1971, his essay gives a glimpse of how the curator approached the issue of globalizing of the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹¹² He called attention to the visible imbalance between

the western centers and other regions in several “objective” aspects: these included factors such as “GNP, average yearly income, levels of literacy and education, and other normal sociological criteria.”¹¹³ Among the other indicators were political, personal and cultural freedom; the number of artists; the infrastructure for art, such as art schools, art critics, and art journals; public or private patronage; and the indigenous artistic tradition.¹¹⁴

Yet Fry put Japan among the limited number of newly emerging art centers in non-Euro-American countries.¹¹⁵ In contrast to other Asian countries that were still suffering from political turmoil or still in the process of developing “a westernized industrial social structure,” Fry argued that Japan had settled in as “one of the greatest industrial nations in the world.”¹¹⁶ This view contradicts Lieberman’s view of Tokyo as a city that superficially resembled cities such as London, New York, Paris, or Rome.¹¹⁷ According to Fry, the factors that boosted Japanese status as a new art center included frequent visits and exchanges with the western art world, the international exhibitions held in Tokyo; and the Occupation, which had exposed the Japanese population to the English language.¹¹⁸ Fry, however, took an ambivalent view of the outcome of this influence—“predictable mixture of derivative imitation of North Atlantic styles”—giving credit to an exclusive number of “original” artists such as Kawara and Takamatsu who were said to have achieved an international standing.¹¹⁹ Keeping in mind the uncertain future of the increasing number of international artists including Japanese artists, Fry advised future artists to learn English in order to become internationally recognized.¹²⁰ Proficiency in English, he ardently believed, was a shortcut to the “international” world, allowing Japanese artists access to outside art information.

The Japanese government also began to promote contemporary art beyond the established international biennials. In March 1966, the Japan Art Festival Association began to hold the “Japan Art Festival” with the financial support of Japanese industries with a mission to “introduce Japanese contemporary art to the world.”¹²¹ Starting in New York, the Association organized a series of exhibitions in various cities all over the world, often in the museum venues of individual cities such as Mexico City and Paris.¹²² Its fifth festival was held in New York in 1970 at the Guggenheim Museum, under the title, “Contemporary Japanese Art”; the intention was to show “the most avant-garde phase of Japanese contemporary art.”¹²³ In an effort to show something “international,” the organization overtly discarded traditionally stereotypical features of traditional Japanese art such as decorativeness.¹²⁴ To bring a more non-Japanese perspective, Fry was invited to participate in the selection committee and to write the introduction to the 1970 event.

By the late 1960s, the Japanese government recognized the need for an independent organization that could focus on “international cultural exchange.”¹²⁵ The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 by the government as “the first specialist organization for international cultural exchange in Japan.”¹²⁶ Operating mainly with governmental funding, but also with donations from private companies, the foundation had a mission to promote “mutual understanding and friendship on the international scene.”¹²⁷ Its 1974 publication, *Art in Japan Today*, was a survey book of Japanese art between 1960 and 1974, aiming to introduce to the international world the “definite trend toward a universal culture which transcends national boundaries” in Japan.¹²⁸ Fifty-two contemporary artists were selected, most of them active both in and outside Japan.

Among the included were artists such as Kawara, Akasegawa Genpei, Ay-O, Arakawa, Matsuzawa Yutaka, Shinohara and Takamatsu. The subsequent publication in 1984, *Art in Japan Today II* presented the international art world with another new decade of contemporary Japanese art. Half the artists featured, however, were repeats from the 1974 list.¹²⁹

Private newspaper companies were also involved in internationalizing contemporary Japanese art. Mainichi Newspapers established two of the major venues, the “International Art Exhibition of Japan” (or Tokyo Biennale) in 1952 and, later, its pendant “Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan” in 1954. Intended as counterparts to such “Olympics of Art” as the Venice Biennale or the São Paulo Bienal, the Tokyo Biennale was an attempt to bring international art to Japan.¹³⁰ While the Biennale introduced new art trends into Japan by inviting international artists from Europe and the U.S., the biennial “Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan,” modeled after the Salon de Mai in France, attracted young Japanese artists including current New York residents Arakawa and Kawara, providing a “bird’s eye view on the Japanese art world.”¹³¹ After the closure of Yomiuri Independent in 1964, the Mainich Newspapers-sponsored exhibition for domestic artists emerged as the new avenue for artists of Japanese origin who wanted to experiment with new styles and forms. Thus, there was frequent debate over whether it should function as a biennial survey of contemporary Japanese art or seek to blur the “domestic” and “international” boundaries by reflecting artistic transformations outside Japan such as Light art and Conceptual art. In 1968, Nakahara Yusuke wrote in his catalogue essay to “The 8th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan” that many of the participants’ works were similar to the “worldwide trends” of “light art”

as a result of their collective search for “an international community” that transcended “narrow nationalism.”¹³² Supporting the new phenomenon, Nakahara argued that these exhibitions should assist blooming creativity that was “on the move” by embracing experimental works. Hariu, one of the organizers of the 1969 “Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan,” called for a perspective that would enable people detect new directions in contemporary art, which he realized by including the Conceptual art of Kawara and Matsuzawa.¹³³ In an age in which “the world has rapidly become smaller” due to fast development in transportation and communication, he argued, the west was not “a far and admirable place” to Japanese artists. Thus, he called for a Japanese art of its time that was neither western nor eastern, but had “universal themes” such as “Light and Movement,” “Fantasy in Object,” and “Virtual Space,” all of which were subtitles of the “Invitational Section” of the year.¹³⁴

The Tokyo Biennale was a product of Japanese anxiety that its contemporary art might lag behind art of other countries, specifically that of Euro-American countries. The host organization described in the introduction of the first 1952 exhibition several problems that Japan had to face: lack of experience of “true ‘modernity’”; the underdevelopment of science and life-style; the “feudal tendency” of Japanese artists; Japanese art lacking an international standard; and the lack of recognition of modern art among ordinary people.¹³⁵ Yet the Tokyo Biennale was often under criticism, as a critic noted in 1956, for including “uninteresting” traditional painters and “country-style painters” whose perception of painting remained out-of-date compared to participants from other countries.¹³⁶ Takiguchi valued the exhibition system as “a new phenomenon in Japan,” triggered by the postwar renewed interest in “internationalization,” which had potential

for directing the Japanese art world. He also expressed concerns that Japanese artists may end up again struggling between the dichotomies of east and west, tradition and modernity, framing issues in ways that could not be resolved easily.¹³⁷ He called for a view that “art is a work of sensitivity and expression” that could attract any international audience, beyond historical and cultural differences.¹³⁸

It is notable that Kawara actively showed his newly-conceived works such as *I Got Up At* postcard series in Japan after 1968, the year he left New York for South America. He was often featured as a Japanese artist in some of the above mentioned exhibitions in Japan, although he did not visit his home country until the winter of 1970-1971. He submitted two works entitled *Collection I—Shusaku Arakawa* and *Collection II—Joseph Kosuth*, for the 1968 Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan. *Collection I* was a 1965 painting by Arakawa, and *Collection II* was *Art as Idea (Water)* (1967), one of Kosuth’s photostats.¹³⁹ Similar to Duchamp’s claiming or declaration of an existing object as an artwork, Kawara’s submission was a gesture or claiming of two works from his collection as his objects. Ironically, Arakawa himself won the highest prize in the same exhibition with a painting, *A Work—By the Window*. Kawara also participated in the “9th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan” in 1969 with a series of *I Got Up At* postcards, which the organizers displayed under one title, *Pictorial Diary* (Fig. 54). Kawara participated in the 10th Tokyo Biennale in May 1970, curated by Nakaraha Yusuke, who invited twenty-seven artists from foreign countries, including Daniel Buren and Sol LeWitt.¹⁴⁰ This exhibition was the culmination of internationalism in the Japanese art world at the time.¹⁴¹ Under the subtitle, “man and matter,” he included artists who favored “situation, place, location, arrangement, process, time” in the form of

installations.¹⁴² The open format of the show might have attracted Kawara, who finally came back to Japan after the Tokyo Biennale in December 1970. Yet it was not Japanese but Esperanto that he used for his date painting made in Japan.

During the 1960s, while Japan endeavored to promote its postwar identity through art, major institutions in New York organized or co-planned exhibitions disclosing the postwar metamorphosis of Japanese art. Many of them were inspired by the emergence of Japanese art in the international biennials in Venice and São Paulo as well as in the Carnegie and Guggenheim Internationals. Japan demonstrated notable transitions in painting and sculpture during a time when abstraction was widely perceived as a universal language of art. The intensive focus on Japanese art after 1945 heralded a new era, in which western critics began to regularly scrutinize contemporary Japanese art. Most of them agreed on its sophistication and proximity to western art models, but often distinguished “Japanese” work from “international” work. Resonating with Takiguchi’s claims, English-speaking critics and curators pointed to the phenomenon in Japan of two distinct groups of artists working hand in hand: internationally oriented artists and locally oriented ones. The critics’ argument was based on the observation that Japan had been following, often superficially, western models to modernize its art, which often jeopardized its identity as Japanese art. However distinctive it looked on the surface, postwar Japanese art was seen as inseparable from the influence of its western counterparts.

In 1966, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, held a large-scale exhibition, “The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture,” which presented forty-six artists, mostly residing in Japan, though a few came from the U.S. and Europe, in collaboration with the San

Francisco Museum of Art.¹⁴³ The show, the first major, up-to-date survey of Japanese art, was designed to exhibit expressionistic abstract or near-abstract painting and sculpture to the U.S. audience, reflecting the optimistic view that abstract art was a universal presence. For the show, the curators, Dorothy C. Miller and William S. Lieberman, selected work that had an “international tendency” made between 1960 and 1965.¹⁴⁴ Among the selected were artists such as Abe Nobuya, Shusaku Arakawa, Tomio Miki, and Yoshihara Jiro—not a coherent enough group to be labeled under the title “abstract art” that the curators thought comprised the “best and most original” contemporary art in Japan.¹⁴⁵ Arakawa submitted three Conceptual paintings; Miki, his signature ear series; Yoshihara, the founder of Gutai group, a recent abstract painting. While some senior artists (Abe Nobuya, Yoshihara Jiro) showed works that differed from their own from the 50s, young artists (Kojima Nobuaki, Kikuhata Mokuma) presented Pop or Pop-inspired sculptural works. Yet some of expressionistic, bold forms in various media (including wood, granite, and oil paint) illustrated how the young artists in Japan in the mid-60s were pursuing abstraction beyond the legacy of *Art Informel*.

Postwar abstract painting in Japan was recognized by Fry in 1970 for successfully combining the influence of the “large canvas of the New York School” with the “mastery of draftsmanship and of linear expression” from the calligraphic tradition.¹⁴⁶ Japanese sculpture of the 1960s, on the other hand, showed a distinct quality by successfully reconciling its own craft traditions with western art, argued Fry.¹⁴⁷ Framed as “a fusion of Western styles with Japanese visual and craft traditions,” postwar Japanese art found its identity with the help of abstract art, but most of the New York curators saw contemporary Japanese art as being in a “dialectical situation,” oscillating between two

different traditions without a prospect that Japan would become exempt from cultural politics.¹⁴⁸ Yet postwar abstract art was the major factor, as Fry argued belatedly in 1970, that would reduce the gap, however small, between Japan and Euro-American culture. Stripping away any recognizable themes while utilizing traditional techniques, certain Japanese artists of the 1960s sought independence from the west and preservation of their heritage—such as their crafts, their distinctive paper, their wood carpentry, and calligraphy—in modes which contained elements of line and drawing inherited from calligraphic traditions along with a tendency unique to Japan, such as the close relationship between art and life or art and nature.¹⁴⁹

The conventional western modalities of painting and sculpture, i.e. oil on canvas or carved wood, became increasingly unpopular among Japanese avant-garde artists, while experimental forms and media such as performances and installations were favored by young artists in the 1960s and the 1970s. As the 1980s arrived, rapidly developing consumerism and economic prosperity gradually shaped Japan into “a postmodern archetype” in which the information revolution and media representation began to blur social boundaries and ruthlessly feed invented or sometimes fabricated images to the young generation.¹⁵⁰ While both traditional and imported cultures were appropriated into daily events such as weddings and entertainment shows, postmodern Japan became permeable to and inseparable from the multinational iconography of Mickey Mouse and McDonald hamburgers. In the postmodern age, Roland Barthes would argue in 1970, Japan is neither eastern nor western but simply another empire, an “Empire of Signs.”¹⁵¹

Japanese Artists in the New Art Mecca: New Identity

Kawara often associated with other Japanese artists in New York. In the journal accompanying his date painting series, he records encounters with art critics such as Tono Yoshiaki, and several artists including Ay-O, Toshio Odate, Yoko Ono, Takamatsu, and Arakawa.¹⁵² He frequently went to informal gatherings in artists' studios or had his own meetings in his studio and apartment.¹⁵³ These gatherings were the source of friendship and information for artists who often had to rely on each other for simple meals or news about exhibitions.¹⁵⁴

In the newly founded capital of world culture, not all the New York-based Japanese followed their initial dreams of staying in the art world. They had to face the problems that any immigrants or travelers would have to deal with: financial, emotional, linguistic, social and cultural. Their range of paying jobs was diverse, from restaurant cooks to college teachers, from taxi drivers to Japanese language teachers. Some were conservators in antique stores and museums.¹⁵⁵ Artists' wives often had to work to support their husbands and families. Kawara's wife, Hiroko, worked for a Japanese company to support him.¹⁵⁶ Living and working conditions varied, depending upon the artist's economic status. While some suffered from poverty and lack of exposure, living in a group in studios on Canal, Howard or Greene Streets in SoHo, others were living in neat, well-maintained studios with a fairly good income.¹⁵⁷ Those who settled in New York included Arakawa and Inokuma. Painters Okada and Kawabata also lived in relative comfort, represented by the Betty Parsons Gallery, as did the sculptor Wakita, shown by the Martha Jackson Gallery. Some of the old residents such as Niizuma, Okada, and Inokuma, were commanding prices of several thousands dollars for their

work. They had found wealthy individual collectors and institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Rockefeller family.¹⁵⁸

During this period, however, New York was not only a contested field for new arts and ideas, but also a place of assumptions and preconceptions, a place in which artists of diverse nationalities gathered and competed with each other. While many of them struggled to make art that would be universal, critics often tied their work to their cultures of origin. Artists not of Euro-American origin had to recognize that their art would not be separated from their nationality or cultural identity. This harsh reality often compelled many Japanese artists in New York to reconsider their identity. Bereday, intrigued by the presence of Japanese artists in New York, observed in her dissertation of 1972 that Japanese artists, despite the changes in their physical work environments, behaved as if they were unknowingly and hopelessly confined within the cultural framework they had learned in Japan. They appeared, she wrote rather vaguely, to perceive reality “in less definite, less clearly contrasting terms than the Westerners.”¹⁵⁹ She found the reasons for this in a Japanese cultural history that had been cloaked in respect for authority; in religious beliefs such as Buddhism, which proposes the frailty of human life in front of the great unknown. Then, she attributed the artists’ focus on the ontological meaning of life to the indeterminate way that the Japanese see life.

Bereday’s diagnosis of the Japanese culture and its effect on artists gives one glimpse of how Japanese artists were perceived in the art world as well as in New York in general. According to her view, art could not be universal and artists could not free themselves from their original culture. Further, to be “Japanese” signified an “inward culture” that supposedly hindered creative energy from being freely expressed.¹⁶⁰ Thus

the Japanese immigrants' artworks were not often able to escape the reductionist or essentialist mentality that focused on discerning qualities associated with the "Japanese" and "Oriental."

I will take four examples to show how Japanese artists responded to this perception in their works: Yayoi Kusama, Shigeo Kubota, Yoko Ono, and Shusaku Arakawa.

Kusama, an example of one of those New York Japanese artists of this period who did not belong to any group in Japan or even in New York, was subject to the same generalized critical perspective. After seeing Kusama's first solo show in New York at the co-operative Brata Gallery in 1959, Donald Judd described her monochrome paintings as "strong, advanced in concept," and said that her expression "transcends the question of whether it is Oriental or American."¹⁶¹ Judd called Kusama "an original painter" who was "thoroughly independent" from the two qualities.¹⁶² His description of Kusama as "independent" was probably the best compliment that the artist/critic could give, invoking while refusing the essentialist dichotomy. Unlike Judd, Sidney Tillim deemed Kusama's focus on painting surface and monotonous colors "Japanese." In his review on the same 1959 show, he wrote that the "impressive veil" of Kusama's monochromes created "a profound symbol of detachment."¹⁶³ He regarded Japanese art as conditioned by a tradition of self-effacement; thus, Kusama's was "an art of withdrawal without the polemical emotions of Western Abstract Expressionism."¹⁶⁴ In his view, "Miss Kusama" showed a prospect, based on her allegedly Japanese qualities, of becoming a promising, young artist in New York. Tillim's conclusion reflected the typical sentiment of the time, focusing on cultural identity as the source of her outstanding achievement and her qualities, such as "patience" and "flexibility."¹⁶⁵

Kusama at times utilized her body for her work, like her contemporaries Carolee Schneemann and Shigeeko Kubota, forthrightly challenging the conventions and prejudices against female artists that often reduced their work to clichés of the feminine. Shy, yet fiercely obsessive, Kusama came to recognize that despite the success of her first solo show in New York, her identity as a Japanese female artist could not be separated from her work. Her phallic, stuffed fabric works of the early 1960s were thus the products of her initial transformation into a feminist, as she sought to escape the impassive image that people saw in her early abstract, monochromatic works. Her phallus-studded, “obsessional” furniture manifested her confrontation with the stereotype of the petite and pleasing Japanese woman.¹⁶⁶ She furthered this bold, unsettling, sexual and even aggressive confrontation through photographs in which she played with her sculptures in overtly sexual poses. Kusama’s performances and performatory works concluded this phase of feminist awareness during her “New York period,” after which in 1973 she returned to Japan for good. In a 1996 interview, Kusama admitted that her work in the 1960s was an attempt to abolish misunderstandings: “Other people would misinterpret my art...so I had to show them myself, with these press releases. Otherwise, everyone just wrote about my being Japanese and they used the word ‘Zen’ to describe absolutely anything I did.”¹⁶⁷

One of her plays on the codes associated with Japanese femininity was to push the exotic image of a Japanese woman to the extreme. Kusama critiqued the assumptions about her cultural and gender identity by making cultural stereotype the subject of her work. She began this manipulation of the exotic by appearing at exhibition openings and artists’ gatherings dressed in a kimono and sporting long, untied black hair. The *Walking*

Piece (Fig. 55), her 1966 street performance in New York, was Kusama's an example of this act. For the performance, she wore a pinkish, bright, heavily decorative kimono of a type ordinarily worn by young girls and carried a parasol with plastic flower decorations, constructing inflated versions of exotic Japanese femininity. Documentary photographs show her wandering the streets of lower Manhattan dressed like that as if she were displaced from her home.¹⁶⁸ She portrayed a girl who looks lost, sometimes weeping, looking at the sky, projecting an image of a doll-like, demure and dislocated girl, as if she were directly answering to the critical accounts of the time, where she was often described in terms such as "oriental" and "Japanese." Kusama's kimono-dressing on the streets of New York remained a rather unsuccessful protest against these critical biases, however, because, despite her intention, such overt use of the clichéd imagery of Japanese womanhood could only oscillate between two poles; fortification of the stereotype and exposure of it.

Kusama's interest in the body as the site of identity coincided with the concerns of some other Japanese female artists in New York in the 1960s, such as Yoko Ono, as well as with those of some American women artists such as Schneemann, who often staged theatrical happenings in the nude with a view to exposing the marginality that the male-dominated art world had imposed on them.¹⁶⁹ Ono, a friend of Kawara's who was often allied with the Fluxus group, staged her famous solo performance, *Cut Piece* (Fig. 56), at the Carnegie Recital Hall, New York in March, 1965 after her two performances of the work in Japan during 1964.¹⁷⁰ In this poignant, proto-feminist performance, she took the role of a victim of male voyeurism, challenging the voyeuristic gaze by asking the audience to cut off pieces of her clothing until stripped to her underwear, she stopped the

performance. Several months later, Kubota (1937-), Japanese artist whose exposure to John Cage in Japan had led her to New York in 1964, staged *Vagina Painting* (Fig. 57). This solo performance, which took place at the Filmmakers' Cinematheque on July 4, 1965 during the Perpetual Fluxus Festival, featured red paint flowing from a brush attached to her crotch to signify menstrual blood as a source of female creative energy, in reaction against the rhetoric of virility tied to Abstract Expressionism. Kubota and Ono thus exemplified a unique characteristic of the Japanese female artists linked with Fluxus: gut-wrenching use of their own female bodies, disclosing "the aggressive and primal nature of woman's repressed sexual physiognomy and physical pain."¹⁷¹

Before doing *Cut Piece*, Ono actively worked in New York along with other avant-garde artists in the musical and visual art worlds. She took part in a series of performances or "happenings" in downtown Manhattan and elsewhere.¹⁷² While Ono was rarely seen as an artist who was conscious of her cultural background, she was subject to the stereotypical perception as a "Japanese" female artist. When she performed "A Grapefruit in the World of Park" in Montreal in August of 1961 (performed again in a concert at New York's Carnegie Recital Hall on November 24, 1961), Eric McLean wrote in his review, Ono, "a Japanese girl," read several lines chosen from a script accompanied by "cries of some creature in a terminal state of idiocy" played through several loudspeakers.¹⁷³

Ono was also unhesitant in integrating Japanese elements into some of her works from this period. She once said that her *Cut Piece* had been inspired by a Buddhist idea of sacrifice or giving of the self. Her *Painting to be Stepped On* (1961) is a work for which she asked the audience to step on a canvas placed on the floor of the gallery. She once

admitted that the piece was inspired by *fumie*, the practice that Edo Japan inflicted on suspected Christians, forcing them to trample a crucifix plaque in order to prove they were non-believers.¹⁷⁴ Ono's *Smoke Painting* (1961) was a product of her attention to simple acts or attitudes toward natural phenomena, which resonated with Zen Buddhist ideas that were current amongst Fluxus artists and the composer John Cage.¹⁷⁵ In this work, Ono put a burning candle into a hole in a canvas and let the canvas create smoke upon contact with the fire.

While mingling with young Japanese avant-gardes and bridging two art movements, Fluxus and Conceptual art, she made breakthroughs in her work, especially in *Cut Piece* and in her poem-like, conceptual pieces collectively entitled *Instructions for Painting* (Fig. 58). While her *Cut Piece* performances, held in Kyoto and Tokyo, embodied the endurance of Japanese women confronting the male gaze, the latter works, shown as *Instructions for Painting* at the Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo in 1962 (following a 1961 version showing at the AG Gallery in New York), presented the potential for using Japanese *haiku* poetry for Conceptual art.¹⁷⁶ Initially handwritten in Japanese, the poetry-based conceptual works were made in English in the summer of 1964 with the publication of her book *Grapefruit*, which presented typeset translations of the works from the previous years, preceding Joseph Kosuth's Conceptual art by several years.¹⁷⁷

Shusaku Arakawa, a former member of the Neo-Dada Organizers, carved out another niche in early Conceptual art in New York, simultaneously with Kawara in the late 60s. In terms of exhibition success, Arakawa was faster than Kawara, probably out of his aspiration to be absorbed into western art. Since his departure from Japan in 1961, Arakawa had built up a career faster than any other artist from Japan, from his first solo

shows at the Dwan Gallery, both in New York and Los Angeles, to his films that were featured at the Whitney Museum of American Art in the early 1970s.¹⁷⁸ Unlike Kawara, who transformed his art drastically by leaving New York, Arakawa continued to advocate and make paintings in the spirit of Marcel Duchamp with the use of language inspired by concrete poetry.

In Japan, typically for the postwar generation, Arakawa confronted all imposed conditions and inhibitions. He engaged in political demonstrations and conspired to burn museums. His radical statements were often aimed at attacking both institutionalized art and the social system. His friends and supporters, including Takiguchi, told him that it would be best for him to leave Japan. As one writer put it, “Japan could not tolerate Arakawa.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, only semi-voluntarily, he broke out of Japan and headed to the U.S., following a trend common among scientists, scholars and artists of the time. In an interview that he gave around the time he left for the U.S., Arakawa noted that the “possibility of concentrating solely on the task of living seems to be larger in New York than in Japan or Europe.”¹⁸⁰

His early works in Japan, such as *Remembering the Past No. 1* (1958) (Fig. 59) and *Remembering the Past No.2* (1959) (Fig. 60), evoked death or the uneasy feeling surrounding death, flirting with semi-abstract, biomorphic forms resembling “zoological specimens” like fish or sperm, mollusks, and marine creatures.¹⁸¹ His series of sculptures between 1960 and 1962 (Fig. 61) featured unidentifiable shapes made of cement and cotton wool placed in coffin-like wooden boxes which were upholstered with shiny, silky fabric. Simply called “Coffin Series,” these works juxtaposed secretive, erotic feelings with a solemn, repugnant subject. The mysterious forms were traces or memories of

something past; perhaps they were traces of the dead or even represented the state of formlessness of a ground zero after a nuclear bombing.

In New York, the city of diversity and transformation, Arakawa explored diverse media from painting to film.¹⁸² Like many urban artists, he found the first inspiration for his work in the streets of New York. He took up painting after he found a pile of blueprint drawings in a garbage dump, soon after his arrival in the States. The complex lines and numbers inspired him to do something that he had always wanted to do. Among his works of the early 1960s, *Portrait No.1* (1961-2) (Fig. 62) showed a mother covered in a grid pattern resembling a net wall or window. He employed a fragmentary, tilted grid pattern on which he arranged arrows and words such as “Mother” and “Mistake.” Rendering the image of a mother, a symbol of home, Arakawa poured out the nostalgia stored up from living in a different culture and language. However, as Takahashi observes, he soon began to question the origin of painting through systematic study of a variety of motifs and themes. Inspired by Takiguchi’s ardent belief in Duchamp, Arakawa admired Duchamp’s idea of painting as non-retinal and even met Duchamp at the Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles in 1967.¹⁸³ He once wrote, “[w]hen Marcel Duchamp said, ‘painting is dead,’ what he wanted to kill was not painting itself, but materiality, which is called retinality. On the other hand, the painting I am speaking about has hardly yet lived.”¹⁸⁴ Occupied with a “Duchampian revolution,” he attempted to elevate art from “animal expression” to “intellectual expression.”¹⁸⁵

Arakawa’s canvases of the late 1960s showed his preoccupation with words and images that reflect fragments of art and life. Wanting to “do overtly what Zen Buddhists do intuitively,” he followed certain of their ways in order to “charter the map of meaning,

to probe at the essence of existence.”¹⁸⁶ His search for underlying principles or elements in living extended to the realm of language. In his statement, “Notes on my paintings—What I am mistakenly looking for” (1969), Arakawa arranged his thoughts on the process of his work in a self-restraining manner: “To trap questions, areas, operations, answers; to make them visible by combining two or more languages. Draw and name it.”¹⁸⁷ He realized that he could bring a play with words, with their “Joke or Point of Similarity,” to a novel level: “If I could use words as objects, that would be something.”¹⁸⁸ Language was not only a carrier of meaning but also of pictorial levels in his work: “Language planes. Parallel languages. Draw and name it.”¹⁸⁹

It was perhaps not coincidental that Arakawa, like Kawara, used language as the new focus of his art. It should be noted that they maintained a friendly, if not close, relationship. Arakawa refused to remain in the pictorial arena. He saw words as being parallel with traditional pictorial elements such as color and form.¹⁹⁰ He arranged them together, in a manner reminiscent of Magritte’s word-image paintings, to suggest meaningful hints or fragments of living. The words and phrases he used were thus noun-based, as if he were attempting to invent new kinds of definitions. Yet distinct from Kawara who found in language a possibility to recreate a new, temporary home (as I will explore further in Chapter Four), Arakawa used language as a means to explore ontological questions, mostly relying on English or French. Arakawa’s painting *Untitled* (1969) (Fig. 63) showed the English sentence, “I have decided to leave this canvas completely blank.” As if to manifest his trials with painting, he had announced his decision to make a blank canvas. He also picked words mirroring his new home, such as “New York City,” “Central Park,” and “Long Island.” Naming, or designating words onto

objects, he suggested, wakes up a dormant object-only world. These operations express “the gradual creation and erosion of objects through names.”¹⁹¹ His use of words, however, was intentionally evasive, as if he were afraid that precision might lessen the ability of a work to exist independently.¹⁹²

Room of My Own: Kawara’s Studio in New York

Kawara had a studio at 340 East 13th Street in the East Village from 1965 until he went on a one-year trip in 1968. Yayoi Kusama and Claes Oldenburg lived in the same building.¹⁹³ This was followed, for Kawara, by almost ten years of studio-less wandering. The studio Kawara had in the mid-1960s, near his apartment on 13th Street, became an integral part of his work, especially in the date painting project.¹⁹⁴ When Kawara did not have many opportunities to exhibit in New York, his East Village studio served not only as his workplace, but also as his own exhibition space.

Kawara displayed his works in three divided rooms as if he were having a show of his own for himself. Honma wrote, after a visit to Kawara’s studio in June 1965 for his upcoming “Exhibition of Japanese Artists Abroad Europe and America” (1965), that the well-organized studio was filled with Kawara’s recent works. These were displayed “in right place in a right distance,” creating a single concentrated “tension in the space.”¹⁹⁵ Honma saw Kawara’s new monochrome-based paintings, which depicted “white or black sentences or words” such as “MAMAN, LYING NUDE, CANAL,” and “RED CHINA, 1965, VIETNAM” on a white, black or pink base.¹⁹⁶ Most of the words reflected Kawara’s concerns at the time: Communist China after 1949; the Vietnam War; and the name of the main street in Chinatown (Canal), not far from his lower Manhattan

neighborhood. Kawara's bold move to create word paintings in New York impressed the Japanese curator, who later wrote, the "white letters on the pink base I saw in his studio really moved me. I was surprised at this clear direct announcement."¹⁹⁷

Kawara took several photographs of the display in his studio in 1966 and inserted them into the front section of his 1966 subtitle journal. Since then, the images have been circulated in most publications about him: a neat, horizontal and occasionally vertical arrangement of date paintings from that year. The photographs (Fig. 64) show his studio as an environment in which the series was growing every day, occupying the space little by little. The scene that Honma described in 1965 was possibly similar to the carefully arranged space shown in the black and white photographs. Yet, instead of the word pictures that Honma had seen, by 1966, the studio contained date paintings, displayed horizontally or in a grid pattern, on the walls and the floors. The photographs provide a hint about how Kawara intended to show the date paintings, which he produced from January through December. As if he was determined to accumulate more each day on the canvases in his studio, the paintings are lined up chronologically from left to right, hung at a precise distance from the floor. The atmosphere is very orderly. From his worktable to the wall, every object is calmly set. Yet, in these photographs of his New York space, Kawara is not visible—the first, tacit evidence of his silent retreat. The unusual display in his studio was soon understood as an artistically minded installation designed by the artist himself. The journal, *Avalanche* (Spring 1972), carried one of the photos from his 1966 journal, with a caption saying that Kawara had created an "environment."¹⁹⁸

Kawara's studio was in a sense a New York version of his "closed room" or "locked room" setting, which dated back to his work in Japan. If his early "locked room" setting

was symbolic of the space of the Japanese mentality in the 1950s, as I discussed in the first chapter, the studio in the East Village functioned as a site for baring his agony and anxiety and as a retreat from the external world. The place of secretive, bloody murders was replaced by the place of solitude, pleasure and work, in which he distanced himself from the outer world. He often retreated to his “mindscape,” a landscape for a wandering mind. His *Location* (1965) (Fig. 65) exemplifies his yearning for a distant world on a black canvas with a simple scientific description of a spot in the Sahara Desert written in white: LAT.31° 25’N, LONG. 8° 41’E. His preference for closed space resurfaced when Kawara’s exhibition at the Dia Center for the Arts in 1993 respected his sense of space: all the windows of the gallery were blocked to make the exhibition space “an autonomous self-sufficient entity.”¹⁹⁹

The subtitles of Kawara’s date paintings illustrate his private, often solitary life inside the studio. This was a place where he connected with ordinary objects: he wrote on Sept. 16, 1966, “A garden with artificial flowers and a yellow net in my studio.” Or, it was a haven for a solitary, personal moment: “I have decided to be alone” (Jan. 20, 1966). His apartment sometimes substituted for his studio, when he segregated himself from the outside world: “Two or three men knocked on the door of my apartment tonight. Without opening the door I asked ‘what’s wrong with you?’ One of them said, ‘it’s all right if you are there’” (May 21, 1967). At other times, the studio was a working, meeting, and gathering place for him. He spent time with people who visited: “Richard, Ginny, Reeve and Peter came to my studio. We had a hot discussion about art” (June 18, 1966); “Bonnie and Jeff Parkins came to my studio” (Sept. 17, 1966). These records anticipated his second “I” series, *I Met*, which he began in Mexico in 1968.

The studio was also a private space for him in which he took “visceral pleasure in experiencing the physical and perceptual changes within his work.”²⁰⁰ The studio was also deemed an erotic site that encouraged objects of love, sometimes self-love: he confessed his daily ritual of mating with time on July 25, 1966: “I make love to the days.”²⁰¹ It was in the workspace that he unveiled his self-confidence, agony, or his obsession with “I.” He confidently wrote a statement in the subtitle of the fourth date painting on January 15, 1966: “This painting itself is January 15, 1966.” He even recorded his act of painting three days later: “I am painting this painting” (January 18, 1966). His confidence, however, fluctuated: he expressed fear on May 29 of the same year, “I am afraid of my ‘Today’ paintings,” while the record of November 18, 1966 shows that Kawara regained self-confidence: “I collect the painted days.”

Kawara similarly indulged himself within a confined space while he was in Mexico. His 1962 *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting*, written in Japanese “behind closed doors” in his final year in Mexico, was a long essay and proto-conceptual work that overflowed with his thoughts and impressions on diverse topics from literature to conversation with a friend, often in a highly deconstructive manner.²⁰² He later confessed that he wanted to make the writing similar to “a maze in a jungle without an exit,” to “the repetitive rhythm of the drums of the native Indians” that he heard in the very place where he was staying.²⁰³ The essay was nearly an auto-erotic manifestation in the form of writing. In the essay, he uses many direct and indirect accounts of relations between a man and a woman at various levels, from marriage to simple sex. Starting the essay with a blatant question, “What is a marriage?” Kawara narrated as if talking to himself. Instead of providing a direct answer, he digressed into other subjects, such as music and death,

before returning to the issue of the relationship between male and female. He repeated this incoherent, self-centered array of thoughts in a way tantamount to a stream of consciousness.

Yet young Kawara, who remained single until 1968, kept returning to the mystic, heterosexual liaison in the *Conjunctive Mood*, an intermediary work between the essays written in Japan and his works of words and codes. Stimulated by Maka, one of his friends in Mexico, who tells Kawara that “I am thinking about getting married,” Kawara ponders women’s favorite colors; men’s complaints of women’s strangeness; and culturally relative female beauty. He also expands his thinking about the various degrees of the heterosexual relationship, musing on the “Decisive separation of a semen and an egg,” and declaring that “People often say that a man is a column and a woman is a sphere.”²⁰⁴ In this monologue, Kawara’s view of men and women is, as I will discuss further in Chapter Four, essentialist: “Women all paint with a circular intuition.” He reduces femaleness to the oval shape. For him, women exist as “a sphere,” “smooth curves” or “mysterious creatures”; while men’s essence is condensed in sperm, the sphere of women essentially lies in a uterus or ovary.²⁰⁵

Japan was not entirely absent from Kawara’s consciousness even when he was in his own private space. When he read newspapers to extract subtitles for the date paintings, he often caught news from Japan. His concern for his home country is at times revealed in his selection of news, from a story about the donation of blood by the imperial family, to mention of typhoon season, and from a note about the historical Osaka Expo in 1970 to mention of frequent student protests.²⁰⁶ Absent is the passionate tone of voice he had used in his work made while in Japan. The subtitles, written in a plain, descriptive

manner with almost exact quoting from newspaper articles, show no emotional engagement with the news. For example, his subtitle for October 21, 1969 says: “Tokyo was brought close to paralysis today as bands of students roamed the streets hurling gasoline bombs and smashing windows in antiwar demonstrations. Violence also broke out in nearly 100 other Japanese cities and towns as 70,000 riot policemen—25,000 of them in Tokyo--attempted to control student protests throughout the country.” Gone are not only his expressive colors and forms but also his personalizing, subjective, engaged attitude toward social incidents. He writes as if he is simply an observer, geographically far away from the locations of the events.

The orderly and calm mood in his New York studio is the opposite of what we see in a rare photograph of Kawara in his Tokyo studio in the mid 1950s (Fig. 66), which was published in *On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo* (1991). In this black-and-white photo, Kawara, in his early twenties, is sitting on a chair with a cigarette in his hand. Next to him are large-scaled, roughly rectangular canvases stacked against each other. The content of the canvases is not visible, as the viewer sees only the verso and the stretchers. Unlike his New York studio, his Tokyo studio must have been used merely as a workplace and not as an exhibition space. It is a little chaotic. Kawara, himself, looks slightly untidy: he is wearing a casual shirt and pants with indoor slippers. His pose seems carefree, the pose of an iconoclast who wanted to “tear things apart.”

Kawara’s photographic portrait of 1965 (Fig. 67), published with Honma’s article, also shows a young man with a sly smile holding a cigarette, against a background that shows the word, CIPHER. This is his last public appearance. Since then, Kawara has disappeared from all the published photographs of his studios, leaving only traces of his

presence such as cigarette butts and eyeglasses. The absence of the artist in the 1966 pictures of his studio is the first sign of his new strategy of avoiding interviews and maintaining silence. The most recent proof of Kawara's absence is found in Henning Weidemann's photographs taken on June 9, 1991. Weidemann witnessed a date painting being made in Kawara's New York studio and was allowed to photograph the process step by step. The result is a book, *On Kawara: June 9, 1991, From "Today" Series (1966-)*, which contains a series of photographs showing the various steps of Kawara's painting from 9:21 am to 9:20 pm.²⁰⁷ In these photographs (Fig. 68), Kawara's presence is again completely absent except for traces of his hand evident in the rough brush traces.

Kawara closed the studio in March 1968, when he left New York for Mexico City. It took him almost ten years, until 1979, to find a permanent space of his own in New York again, although he returned to the city from time to time staying temporarily with acquaintances. For his continuous wandering, he made a compact package that could work as "a mobile studio" for small format canvases and could be set up easily in any hotel room.²⁰⁸ His 1968 departure effectively heralded another phase in his artistic career, the turning of himself into a voluntary nomad, his life and art ever more interconnected.

NOTES

¹ From 1959 to 1964, Kawara stayed in or passed through Mexico City, New York, Paris, and Toledo. He spent much of his stays observing and learning about different cultures and pondering the future of his art.

² Roland Waspe, "On the Way: 1964 Paris – New York," *On Kawara: 1964 Paris – New York Drawings* (St. Gallen, Switzerland: Kustverein St. Gallen Kunstmuseum, 1997), 14.

³ *Ibid.* Kawara is known as a masterful chess player.

⁴ The date painting series was first conceived in the fall of 1965 as Kawara was walking the streets of New York. "In a small hollow atop a skyscraper, he saw a very

white signboard hanging against the blue sky. The signboard was of perfect size and proportion, and on it were a few lines written in black—a common layout in advertising. On Kawara brought the image of what he saw in the hollow of the skyscraper back with him to his atelier. ‘It was just what I wanted. A genuine object found in the streets.’” See Matsuoka Seigow, “Ars Magna of a Day,” *On Kawara* (Nagoya: Akira Ikeda Gallery, 1984), n.p.

⁵ Lynne Cook, *On Kawara: One Thousand Days One Million Years* (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1993), n.p.

⁶ Prototype of *I Met* appears in his journal of 1966, in which Kawara began to record who he met or who visited his studio: “Janine came to my studio” (January 16, 1966); “Richard, Ginny, Reeva and Peter came to my studio. We had a hot discussion about art” (June 18, 1966); “Bonnie and Jeff Parkins came to my studio” (September 17, 1966) “Luis Lopez, Loza, Janet Kranzberg and Vlady were in my studio early the morning” (November 23, 1966) “I met Nam June Paik at the B.M.T. Canal St. subway station. It was 7:40 p.m.” (April 21, 1967); “Today I met John Chamberlain. He took my studio last February” (April 27, 1967); “I visited Charles Hinman this afternoon in his studio” (June 9, 1967); “C. Oldenburg and J. Klein came to my studio this afternoon. In the evening I went to Oldenburg’s studio to ask him if I could use my asking him as the title of this painting” (February 4, 1967).

His listing of friends and acquaintances occurs frequently before his trip to Mexico in 1968, specifically between January 1966 and March 1968. It does not continue after he started the *I Met* series in May 1968. “Rudolf Zwirner, Kasper Konig and I were in my apartment this afternoon from 1.00 to 2.30 p.m.” (April 12, 1967); “I played ‘Monopoly’ with Joseph, Christine and Hiroko this afternoon. We ate a lot of spaghetti.” (January 1, 1968).

⁷ His date painting journal records the awarding of a scholarship from the Brooklyn Museum Art School on March 17, 1967. Here, Kawara transcribed the letter from the school: “Remarks: Mr. On Kawara is on a one-half scholarship continuing this year’s study which began September 28, 1966 and ends May 31, 1967. This continuation scholarship is until this date May 31, 1967. (For full-time study five afternoons a week).”

⁸ Amy Newman, *Challenging Art: Artforum 1962-1974* (New York: Soho Press, Inc., 2000), 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰ Edward F. Fry, “Eastern Europe, South America, the Orient and the Artistic Third World,” *Guggenheim International Exhibition 1971* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1971), 32.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Lawrence Alloway, "Introduction," *Guggenheim International Award 1964* (New York: The Guggenheim Foundation, 1964), 14-17; quoted in Mary Hale Bereday, "Japanese Artists in New York City," dissertation for Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1972, 488.

¹⁴ Hiroko Hiraoka and Kawara met in New York during Kawara's first stay and resumed their friendship in Paris between 1963 and 1964 when both were in Paris. Hiroko returned to New York first, and Kawara followed her in 1964.

¹⁵ Kawara first left for Mexico and later Hiroko joined him there.

¹⁶ Linda Weintraub reported, after meeting with Kawara, about his argument with Carl Andre: "Kawara explained that many years ago, Andre was expounding on the glories of Marxism to a group of increasingly impatient French socialist intellectuals. They had all gathered in a café on a sweltering summer day. Kawara interrupted the monologue to remind Carl that Marx had no sympathy for art or for religion. Marx's prediction that all artists would become Sunday painters belonged to societies that no longer believed that Sundays were holy days of Sabbath." See Weintraub, "On Kawara: Self-documentation," *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s-1990s* (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, 1996), 58.

¹⁷ Yokoyama Tadashi, "At the Junction of Time and Space: On Kawara in the 1950s," *On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo* (Tokyo: Parco, 1991), 55-56.

¹⁸ Kawara's journal for his date paintings shows traces of these encounters. On September 1, 1966, he wrote that "Tony Cox and Yoko Ono left New York for Europe early in the morning." His entry for February 4, 1967 was "C. Oldenburg and J. Klein came to my studio this afternoon. In the evening I went to Oldenburg's studio to ask him if I could use my asking him as the title of this painting." He recorded on April 12, 1967 that "Rudolf Zwirner, Kasper König and I were in my apartment this afternoon from 1.00 to 2.30 p.m." On April 21, 1967, he typed that "I met Nam June Paik at the B.M.T. Canal St. subway station. It was 7:40 p.m." The entry of April 27, 1967 revealed "Today I met John Chamberlain. He took my studio last February." Shigeko Kubota, then married to David Bahrman, appeared on October 13, 1967: "David and Shigeko Bahrman dropped in this evening."

¹⁹ Kawara briefly stayed in Chambers Street, a neighborhood which also attracted Yoko Ono and others, before he moved to the East Village. Kawara's entry for his journal on Jan. 19, 1966 records his move "From 123 Chambers St. to 405 E. 13th St." Kawara was staying in then-friend Hiraoka Hiroko's loft on Chambers Street. Ono also had her studio in a loft at 112 Chambers Street in the early 1960s. There she organized performances and created environments with LaMonte Young from December 1960 through June 1961.

²⁰ By 1977, Kawara came back to New York and found a permanent living space on Greene Street, where he and Hiroko had two children. Until 1977, Hiroko always accompanied Kawara in his travels, but she stopped doing so after they had children.

²¹ He saw the transition and advance of the avant-garde in New York: “4th annual New York avant-garde festival in New York’s Central Park.” (Sept. 9, 1966); “The Metropolitan Museum of Art had 100,000 visitors and The Lannis Museum of Normal Art entertained young artists this afternoon in New York.” (Nov. 12, 1967); He also absorbed the new terms that referred to those arts: “Earth work.” (Apr. 26, 1969); “Conceptual Art.” (Oct.9, 1969); “Body Art.” (Oct.19, 1971). He also knew the fast-changing avant-garde art scene: “‘The LSD I am proposing is literal.’ says Allen Ginsberg, in ‘The East Village Other’.” (Dec. 22, 1966); “A black out for a quarter hour in Rome tonight and ‘Vehicle’ by Lucinda Childs, ‘Variations VII’ by John Cage as one of ‘9 Evenings: Theater and Engineering’ at the 69th Regiment Armory, 25th St. and Lexington Av. New York.” (Oct. 16, 1966); “In New York, David Tudor is playing his electric bandoneon now.” (Oct. 18, 1966). All the entries are from his subtitles for date paintings.

²² Yokoyama, 58.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Bereday, 486.

²⁶ Ibid., 487. She writes that she wanted “to discover what happens when Japanese artists attempt to escape the esthetically beautiful but severely formalistic traditional arts of Japan.” She found one hundred sixty painters and sculptors who settled in New York during the 1960s. After contacting these artists by telephone, she selected and interviewed fifty-four in person. She conducted other extensive interviews with nine artists for her dissertation, artists whose work reflected the degree or level of “liberation” from their home culture and at the same time the evidence or shadow of their original culture.

²⁷ Michel Tapié (1909-1987) was the first major European critic who acknowledged the Gutai Group in Fall 1957. He saw affinities with *Art Informel*, the abstract art movement that he adamantly praised. He even attempted to promote Gutai as a branch of *Art Informel*. Due to Tapié’s effort, Gutai became known to the west as Japanese Art Informel through exhibitions in New York, Paris and Turin. In 1965, Gutai was included in the “Nul” exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Allan Kaprow finally included Gutai in his anthology, *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings* (1966) as an example of his concept of the happening.

²⁸ Bereday, 487.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Tatehata Akira, "Neo-Dada Since Then," *Neo-Dada in Japan 1958-1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of "White House,"* (Oita City Board of Education, Japan, 1998), 286. The original members who launched the group in April, 1960 at the Ginza Gallery were Akasegawa Genpei, Shusaku Arakawa, Ishibashi Betsujin, Iwasaki Kunihiro, Ueno Norizo, Kazakura Sho, Shinohara Ushio, Toyoshima Soroku, and Yoshimura Masunobu.

³¹ Tatehata, 286.

³² Ikeda Tatsuo, in his memoir, writes about his first encounter with the group: "In Ginza, in 1960, there was an exhibition of the Neo-Dada Group. I had met one member of the Neo-Dada Group in Kawara's apartment. That person said, Do you wish to be famous? That's why we make scandals. I sensed that quite a different way of painting had emerged, different from what I knew or what I did. Being different or strange is good whatever it is. Personally I had some sympathy with their irresponsibility, but at the same time I was tired of their weird energy. I also sensed a crisis in the way they emitted their energy because they were so childish and naive." See Ikeda, *Dream, Reality, Document: One Painter's Testimony of His Age* (Tokyo: 1990), 255-56.

Against the Security Treaty between Japan and the U.S., Neo-Dada members also organized demonstrations on the Zaimokuza Beach in Kamakura and on the streets of Ginza and Shinjuku. In their gathering place, a studio designed by Isozaki Arata called "Shinjuku White House," they had group talks and presentations on Saturday night. It was a show of self-confidence in spite of their difficulty finding exhibition space for their noisy, radical art. Following the tradition of Gutai, and anticipating High Red Center, Neo-Dada Organizers opened a path of communication with Kyushu-ha of Fukuoka and the Zero Jigen (Zero Dimension) of Nagoya. They experimented with new forms and new materials often employing sensational methods. One of the members, Ushio Shinohara, in the similar spirit of Gutai Group's feet-painting, had staged a "boxing painting" performance in 1958 with his half-naked body and a mohawk hair-cut before he joined the group. Shinohara dipped his gloved fists into a bucket of paint and threw punches along the edge of an extensive sheet of canvas. Akasegawa declared during his performance: "Having appeared on this seething, red-hot earth of the 20.6 century that tramples sincere works of art, the only way we can avoid being massacred is to become the butchers ourselves." On one occasion, Yoshimura hammered and crushed a chair with karate chops, metallic washbowls, galvanized sheet iron, and stoves. During one collaborative performance, "[a]s tape recorded jazz and sexy whispers filled the room, Ishibashi ran around howling like a wild beast, while Kazakura would raise his face from a bucket of water and shout at the top of his lungs, 'It's war, it's war, it's World War III.'" See Hariu Ichiro, "The Phases of Neo-Dada in Postwar Art," *Neo-Dada in Japan 1958-1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of "White House,"* (Oita City, Japan: Oita City Board of Education, 1998), 277.

³³ Their manifesto of 1960, prepared for their first exhibition in April 1960, goes as follows: "In whatever way we fantasize about what our future may be in 1964 – about the way that one atomic explosion will lightheartedly resolve everything – Picasso's fighting

bulls move us now no more than the blood splattered from a run-over stray cat. We enter the ring on an Earth gone mad in this 20.6 century – the century which has stamped on serious works of art. The only way we will be spared the massacre is to turn into the slaughterers themselves.” Quoted in Akasegawa Genpei, “The 1960s: The Art Which Destroyed Itself: An Intimate Account,” *Reconstructions: Avant-garde Art in Japan 1945-1965* (Oxford, England: Museum of Modern Art, 1985), 85.

³⁴ It was in November 1964 after the Neo-Dada Organizers disbanded that Rauschenberg finally visited Tokyo and showed the entire process of construction of *Gold Standard* at an open forum held in Sogetsu Hall. As if to show respect for this American Neo-Dada artist, former member Shinohara later made a series called *Imitation Art* into which he appropriated American Neo-Dada works such as Rauschenberg’s *Coca-Cola Plan* and Jasper Johns’s *Three Flags*.

³⁵ In 1962 Yoshimura left for the U.S., returning to Japan in 1966 (because of a visa problem). Hiraoka Hiroko, a female artist who often associated with the Neo-Dada Organizers and later became Kawara’s wife, also came to New York in 1962. In 1964, Kinoshita Shin and Toyoshima Soroku followed Yoshimura to New York. Kinoshita eventually settled in Paris. Tanabe Santaro came to New York in 1966. Shinohara Ushio also came to New York in 1969, sponsored by the John D. Rockefeller III Fund, along with Miki Tomio who had cooperated with the members. Akasegawa stayed in Japan to form the Hi-Red Center. His later 1000 Yen bill project was brought to court and stirred the entire country to rethink freedom of art and the artist. See Reiko Tomii, “Concerning the Institution of Art: Conceptualism in Japan,” *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 20-22.

³⁶ Suga Akira wrote, from “its very beginnings, Neo-Dada was an individual enterprise, and each member achieved prominence through the medium of the group, like seeds from different plants raised in the same soil. It was only afterwards that their differences emerged....Some had political agendas, others were apolitical; some were activists, others were aesthetes....” See Suga, “Why the Current Interest in Neo-Dada?” *Neo-Dada Japan*, 289.

³⁷ Following the tradition of Dada and joining the loose group of “international neo-Dadaists of the postwar era,” Fluxus integrated individualism, existentialism and Zen ideas. Through everyday life activities, artists explored the possibility of locating the site of art in “the social and mental nature of being.” See Munroe, “A Box of Smile: Tokyo Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and the School of Metaphysics,” *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 215.

³⁸ Munroe, 218.

³⁹ Among them were Kuniharu Ariama, Ay-O, Ezaki Kenjiro, Hashimoto Sohei, Hi Red Center, Ichianagi Toshi, Izumi Tatu, Yoshida Hidekazu, Koizumi Fumio, Takehisa Kosugi, Shigeko Kubota, Matsudaira Yoriaki, Morita Shiryu, (Nakahara Yusuke), Yoko Ono, Saito Takako, Nam June Paik, Shiomi Mieko (Chieko), Sugai Kumi, Takahashi

Yuji, Tone Yasunao, (Tono Yoshiaki), and Wada Yoshimasa. The bracketed names are those of critics in Japan who were included as consultants. See Jon Hendriks, *Fluxus Codex* (Detroit, MI: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, 1988).

⁴⁰ Hi Red Center is a good example. This group's activities remained within Japan.

⁴¹ Munroe, 218.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Honma Masayoshi, "On Kawara Thereafter—A Visit to His Studio in New York," *Bijutsu Techo* (December, 1965), translated by Ari Hiroshige.

Among the participants from New York were Kawara, Arakawa, Hiraoka Hiroko, Yayoi Kusama, Ay-O, Iwasaki Taku, Kenzo Okada, Kawashima Takeshi, Kawabata Minoru, Kuwayama Tadaaki, Kuwayama Tadasuke (Tadasky), Odate Toshio, Niizuma Minoru, Yoshimura Masunobu, Ohashii Yutaka, and Fukui Nobumitsu.

⁴⁴ The reason to limit the area covered to two continents was that the organizers were unable to obtain enough information about Japanese artists in other places. Honma Masayoshi, "Japanese Artists in America," catalogue of *Exhibition of Japanese Artists Abroad Europe and America* (Tokyo: the National Museum of Modern Art, 1965), n.p.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bereday, 46

⁴⁸ Honma, "Japanese Artists in America," n.p.

⁴⁹ Bereday, 24.

⁵⁰ See *Paris in Japan: The Japanese Encounter with European Painting* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1987) for more information on these early Japanese artists in Europe. This catalogue was published for the traveling exhibition of the same title that toured Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis (October 2-November 22, 1987), Japan House Gallery, New York (December 11, 1987-February 7, 1988), and Wight Art Gallery, University of California at Los Angeles (February 21-April 3, 1988).

⁵¹ In fact, Japanese modernism has been periodically examined by scholars and critics since the mid-nineteenth century (Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian, "Introduction," *Postmodernism and Japan*, [Duke Univ. Press, 1989], x.). Like any non-Western nation whose "encounter with the West has been disastrous and traumatic," Japan kept questioning the validity of forms of modernization that did not properly consider the historical conditions of each period. (Judy Annear, "Daughters of Art History," *Zones of Love: Contemporary Art from Japan* [Sydney: The Museum of Contemporary Art,

Sydney, 1991], 12. The exhibition was held from July-September, 1992 at Sydney; May-June 1991 at Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; July-September 1991 at Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth etc.) Toru Matsumoto divided the history of modernism in Japan into three phases. The first is the time between Meiji era (1868-1912) and Taisho era (1912-1926) when modernization equaled Europeanization. The second period is when the fascists constructed modernism as an enemy of Japanese identity and tactically rejected it from 1929 to the end of World War II. The Tokyo debate in 1941, as I examined in the first chapter, exemplified this period. (A new phrase, “Japanese oil painting” was brought into currency during this time. Toru Matsumoto, “Japanese Art in the 1950s and 60s: Surrounded by a Transparent Wall,” *Japanese Modern Art: Painting from 1910 to 1970*, ed. by Irmtraud Schaarschmidt-Richter [Zurich: Edition Stemmler, 2000], 66-67.) The 1950s and 1960s falls in the third phase, when modernism reconfigures itself internationally.

⁵² Suga, “Why the Current Interest in Neo-Dada?” 292. See also Chiba Shigeo, *Deviations in Contemporary Art 1945-1985* (Tokyo: Shobunsha, 1986).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Tatehata, “Fringe Modernism,” *Zones of Love: Contemporary Art from Japan* (Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1991), 28.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Matsumoto, 68.

⁵⁹ Munroe, “To Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun: The Gutai Group,” *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, 98.

⁶⁰ Minemura Toshiaki, “Deconstruction and Repetition of Organizing,” *Mizue* 921 (December 1981): 74. Minemura extends the 1960s further to the post-Mono-ha period, focusing on the “deconstructing” tendency shared by those movements. Thus, his idea of the 1960s covers from 1953 to the early 1970s. He divides the period into two; one extends from Gutai Group to the exhibition, *Trick and Vision* (1968) and the second half is from Mono-ha to post-Mono-ha. Minemura’s notion of “deconstructing” emphasizes the melting down of traditional media in art. However, I prefer to see the 1960s as the ending with the advance of Mono-ha, a movement that emphasized Asian spirituality as opposed to the hegemony of western art. Despite the formal similarity with Arte Povera or Minimal Art in Euro-American countries, movements that explored a phenomenological approach, the idea of Mono-ha was based on a critique of the biases of internationalism in Japan.

⁶¹ The pursuit of radical and sensation-seeking art continued with the Hi Red Center, founded in May 1963. The name is an acronym composed of the English for the first characters of each of its three members' names; Takamatsu Jiro (b.1936), Akasegawa Genpei (b.1937), Nakanishi Natsuyuki (b.1935). Before the Hi Red Center, Akasegawa, a former member of Neo-Dada Organizers, had held "World Defeat Dinner Festival" on Aug. 15, 1962; "Yamanote Event" on Yamanote Subway Line on Oct. 18; and the play, "Criminals," in Waseda University on November 22. After the 1963 Yomiuri Independent, the three members gathered in Shinjuku and coined Hi Red Center as their official group name. They had an event in Shinjuku, at the Tokyo Imperial Hotel, called "Funny Play" in 1964. This event caught the attention of Nam June Paik and Yoko Ono, both of whom attended in the *Shelter Plan* event in January 1964. During the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, the Hi Red Center swept streets in Ginza. This cleaning performance was their last group activity. In 1966, their earlier activities were again put in the center of public attention when Akasegawa was indicted for printing a 1000 Yen note. His arrest and trial, simply called 1000 Yen Trial [Sensatsaiban], lasted several years before he cleared his name in 1970. See Alexandra Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge: the Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s," *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, 159.

⁶² Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge," 149.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Asahi Newspaper, April 12, 1951; quoted in Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 548-49.

⁶⁵ MacArthur's speech on May 5, 1951 during the Senate hearing; quoted in Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 550.

⁶⁶ Takiguchi Shuzo played many roles, including poet and art critic. He was credited for introducing Surrealism to Japan at the end of the 1920s. He corresponded with Parisian Surrealists, notably including André Breton, in the 1930s. He wrote an article about Surrealism in Japan for the combined number of the Parisian magazine *Cahiers d'art*, number 5-6, in 1935. He was involved with the "Exhibition of Foreign Surrealist Works" in Japan in 1937 held with the support of the Parisian Surrealist group. In 1940 he published *Miró*, which may be the first monograph on the artist both in the west and the east. The loss of all his papers in the Tokyo air raid of 1945 did not stop him from writing.

After the Second World War, Takiguchi became active as an art critic (he began writing art reviews in 1950), and art organizer or curator. He supported many young unknown artists. As Japanese commissioner for the Venice Biennale in 1958, he went to Venice and afterwards toured Europe meeting Dali, Fontana, Tapies, Breton, Michaux and others. Takiguchi also held his first one man show of drawings in 1960. Since then, he showed his drawings and decalcomanias, and made books of poems and drawings, including *To and From Rose Selavy: Selected Words of Marcel Duchamp* (1968) with Jasper Johns and Shusaku Arakawa, and *Handmade Proverbs to Joan Miro* (1970) with Miro. He also published books with Sam Francis, Antoni Tapies and Japanese artists. He

published *Poetic Experimentation by Takiguchi Shuzo 1927-1937* in 1967. *Collection Takiguchi Shuzo* is his collected writings published (in 13 volumes with 2 supplements) between 1981-1998. Based on the information in a website of Tama Art University in Japan, which houses an archive under his name.

⁶⁷ He curated more than two hundred exhibitions for young artists at Takemiya Gallery from 1951 to 1957. The gallery space was provided by Kakei Masato who owned an art supply shop and wanted to attract young artists. He created a gallery space in front of his store and began to hold free solo shows for artists from January 1, 1951 in Tokyo. He asked Takiguchi to curate shows for the gallery and Takiguchi took charge of selecting artists until the space had to be closed in 1957 under pressure from tax officials who suspected the motivation for the free exhibitions. See Fujimatsu Hiroshi, "Takemiya Gallery and Takiguchi Shuzo," *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964), 64-65; and Ebizuka Koichi, "Shuzo Takiguchi and the Takemiya Gallery," *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan* (Tokyo: Tama Art University, 1997), 59-66.

Takiguchi believed that solo exhibitions of young artists should be held more under the environment that favored exhibitions of famous artists and groups. His curatorship at the Takemiya Gallery was an attempt to encourage gallery patronage of emerging artists who had difficulty in finding exhibition space. (See his essay, "Misc. view of exhibitions," *Yomiuri Newspaper*, 6 November, 1953.)

⁶⁸ Kaido Kazu, "Reconstruction: The Role of the Avant-garde in Post-War Japan," *Reconstructions: Avant-garde Art in Japan 1945-1965*, (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1985), 14.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁰ Okabe Aomi, "Action et Avant-Garde," *Japon des Avant-gardes 1910-1970* (Paris : Centre Georges Pompidou, 1986), 350.

⁷¹ Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge," 154. She writes, "[a]s the third generation of postwar artists, the Yomiuri Independent groups inherited the lessons of Surrealism, practiced in the late forties by the first generation, including Abe Nobuya, Fukuzawa Ichiro, and Okayama Taro—whose paintings depicted such fantastic horrors of war as skeletal corpses lying in the sand or piled in a heap before a demonic landscape—which taught the necessity for art to function as a violent assault on the complacency of mundane consciousness. They also inherited the Social Realism of the second postwar generation, transforming its essential "realism" from one that served a Marxist dogma to one that embraced the detritus produced by mass capitalism."

⁷² After seeing the 1960 Yomiuri Independent, art critic Tono coined the term "anti-art." He had seen and known about the neo-Dada movement in the U.S. and its European counterpart, *Nouveau Realisme*, before he found a similar quality in the works of the key members of the Neo-Dada Organizers.

⁷³ For more details, see Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge," 157.

Without any direct relation or contact with the so-called neo-Dadaist Rauschenberg or Jasper Johns in New York, but conscious of their art, the Neo-Dada Organizers had their first show in April 1960, organized by Shinohara Yoshio and Yoshimura Masunobu, around the same time that the critic Pierre Restany formulated the manifesto of the French group on April 16, 1960. Responding to the political conditions via the ideas of the Dadaists of prewar Europe, the Neo-Dada Organizers were, like the Gutai Group, engaged in actual political activities: Arakawa and Shinohara threw stones at the police and planned to bomb the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. The historical significance of this group in postwar Japanese art is still being evaluated, due to its short history (less than one year) and the lack of artworks produced during the period. A reevaluation of Neo-Dada works took place in Japan in the 1990s with retrospectives of Arakawa. *Neo-Dada in Japan* (1998) was organized in Oita City to commemorate the legacy of the group. Suga wrote about the legacy of the group, “[f]or the ten former members of Neo-Dada who were interviewed to produce a visual record for this exhibition, the 1960’s, the White House, and what they all experienced there and then had a overwhelmingly decisive effect on their later lives. They could never assume positions of social or political power, never work within the system. They continue to be critical of society, and involved in an ongoing struggle with themselves. It is in this sense that I would call them dadaists.” See Suga, “Why the Current Interest in Neo-Dada?” 293.

⁷⁵ The host of the Yomiuri Independent seriously considered canceling the show. One year, artists such as Kazekura Sho exhibited their own naked bodies in a gallery. When someone asked him, “Where is your work and what is its title?,” he answered, “It’s me right here. It’s called *The Real Thing (Jitsu-butsumu)*.” (Munroe, “Morphology of Revenge,” 159). Finally, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum issued a set of regulations for the 1962 Yomiuri Independent out of a concern that an increasing number of works might cross the line of decency. Entitled as “Standards for Exhibited Works,” the regulations announced that organizers would decline “works which (1) had devices that issued unpleasant noises or high temperatures, (2) used materials of which there was the possibility of unpleasant smell or decomposition, (3) used bladed instruments and other such objects as materials, entailing the risk of possible injury, (4) risked transgressing public health laws by strongly offending the viewer, (5) placed materials like gravel or sand directly on the floor or used materials that might damage or soil the floor surface, or (6) hung objects directly from the ceiling.” See Hariu, “The Phases of Neo-Dada in Postwar Art,” 278-79.

⁷⁶ Nakahara Yusuke, “Japanese Contemporary Art and Its Milieu: Focusing on the Seventies,” *Art in Japan Today II: 1970-1983* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1984), 11.

⁷⁷ This powerful collective bursting of avant-garde art across diverse genres never occurred again in Japanese art history. The accumulated force geared to transform the landscape of art started to diminish toward the latter half of the sixties. As the political became less powerful in art, the attention of young artists turned to the issue of medium, seeking a new material to express their ideas. See Nakahara, “Japanese Contemporary Art and Its Milieu: Focusing on the Seventies,” 12.

⁷⁸ Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994), 61

⁷⁹ Munroe, "Morphology of Revenge: the Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s," 159.

⁸⁰ Ian Buruma, "Japanese Avant Garde," *A Cabinet of Signs: Contemporary Art from Post-Modern Japan* (Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1991), 17. The exhibition was held at Tate from Oct. 16-Dec. 1, 1991; and traveled to Whitechapel Art Gallery, Dec. 18, 1991-Feb. 2, 1992; to Malmo Konsthall, Sweden, March 28-May 10, 1992); see also Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*, 61

⁸¹ Buruma, "Japanese Avant Garde," 17.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸³ William S. Lieberman, "Introduction," *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966), 9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-10. In fact, *kashi garō* or rental galleries were common in Japan in the postwar era.

⁸⁷ Yaguchi Kunio, "The Venice Biennale and Japan," *The Venice Biennale: 40 Years of Japanese Participation* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation & The Mainichi Newspapers, 1995), 13.

⁸⁸ Kaido, 21.

⁸⁹ Matsumoto, 68; Matsumoto pessimistically positions Japan after 1945 within a confined space: "what is important here is that neither Japanese sovereignty nor its preservation came about through our own capacities—quite apart from the question of whether in this case, those capacities should immediately have been turned into military capacities. Despite its proximity to one of the most menacing fronts between east and west, Japan experienced neither a division of the country nor a repeated dispatch of troops to the front; nor did the country become a theater of war. Yet peace, or the economic reconstruction under that peace, was something that came about without Japanese contribution, something that left Japan almost no scope for participation and was maintained by a balance of political and military forces. This may seem a childish standpoint, inadmissible in a discussion between adults, but the fact is that we always confronted the reality of the post-war world from a space as small as a greenhouse, surrounded on all sides by glass, by a transparent wall." See, Matsumoto, 67.

⁹⁰ Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, in her reading of Japanese art history, points out the need for art history in Japan during the imperial competition in the nineteenth century among England, France, the United States, and Germany. Taking a part in representing Japan as a nation, art history was put to the test to make Japan “maintain a respectable position in the international arena.” See Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, “Japanese Art History 2001: The State and Stakes of Research,” *The Art Bulletin*, 88/1 (March 2001): 111. Art history mounted a search for the “special qualities of Japanese art—in its canon and its conceptualization—as a materialization of the Japanese national character.” Cultural assets were to be preserved, documented and exhibited as a means to prove the modern status of the country in a contested world. (Yiengpruksawan, 116.)

⁹¹ Alloway suggested that the audience should accept the presence of international styles, of abstraction in particular, in post-war art: “There is, obviously, an international style in post-war art. Sometimes one country may be the origin of a particular way of painting; sometimes the shared qualities emerge spontaneously. An international style does not, of course, impose uniformity on its members. In fact, many of the artists themselves recoil from the notion of a globally unified style and prefer to emphasize national or regional characteristics.” See Alloway, 14-17; quoted in Bereday, 488.

⁹² Beverly Adams, “Locating the International: Art of Brazil and Argentina in the 1950s and 1960s,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2000, 4.

⁹³ Nakahara, 11.

⁹⁴ Adams, 3.

⁹⁵ Alloway, 14-17.

⁹⁶ There were voices of worry over the identity of art in the international contests and the advance of international styles. Alloway, serving as a judge for the 1964 Guggenheim International Award, wrote about the increasing tension between the issues of nationality and internationality in art that was overshadowing the art worlds in each country. Nationality in art, according to Alloway, is as difficult to define as in other fields. Those concerned with expanding “the present international style of abstract art” complain that the new style transforms art into something “rootless” and unidentifiable. Facing “a great deal of provincial criticism of international art at present,” Alloway recalls the historical fact that styles such as “[t]he Gothic, the Baroque, Romanticism, were all international in their reach and central in their cultural value.” In fact, art is moved and transferred as human beings spread. It disseminates “along all available channels of distribution,” and mingles with local forms of art. The tendency became stronger in the twentieth century due to several factors: “an unrivalled knowledge available to the artist of the art of the past and of the rest of the world” and “the speed with which information is transmitted and the fullness of the message, the one-to-one correspondence of the original work and its surrogates.” See Alloway, 14-17; in Bereday, 488.

⁹⁷ Hariu Ichiro, “Japanese Art as Seen in the Venice Biennale 1952-68,” *The Venice Biennale: 40 Years of Japanese Participation* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation & The Mainichi Newspapers, 1995), 21.

⁹⁸ The *Exhibition of Japanese Painting and Sculpture Sponsored by the Government of Japan* (1953) was a collection of traditional pre-modern artworks from Japan. The exhibition was held in five venues in America: National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Art Institute of Chicago; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle. Japan sent almost one hundred pieces of traditional painting and sculpture from nine museums, twenty-eight religious collections, and twenty-one private collections. Some of the pieces were national treasures including the oldest known Buddhist painting in Japan (*Taishaku Ten*, 9th century).

⁹⁹ Takahashi Seichiro, then chairman of Commission for Protection of Cultural Properties, expressed in a preface to the catalogue the Japanese hope to “contribut[e] something to world culture” and stressed the meaning of the revived cultural liaison between the two countries: “I cannot help thinking that the importance of knowing each other well is all the more to be emphasized now for the sake of tightening the bond of a lasting friendship between our two nations.” Furthermore, he argued that “beauty unites mankind.” See *Exhibition of Japanese Painting and Sculpture Sponsored by The Government of Japan* (Washington DC: National Gallery of Art, 1953), 7.

¹⁰⁰ Since Japan’s first unofficial participation in the 1897 Venice Biennale, Japanese artists sporadically showed their works throughout the first half of the twentieth century in pavilions of other countries where they were staying geographically, such as France or the U.S. In 1897, Japan showed works (seventy five works) by members of *Nihon Bijutsu Kyokai* [Japan Art Association]. Among their works were thirty five Japanese style paintings, bronze sculptures, pottery, cloisonné, metalwork, cast metal, lacquer ware etc. More unofficial participation of Japanese artists took place in 1924; in 1928 (16th Biennale), Fujita Tsuguji’s three paintings were displayed in a special exhibition of the Ecole de Paris; in 1934 (19th Biennale), Kuniyoshi Yasuo was shown in the American Pavilion; and in 1940 (22nd Biennale), Kuniyoshi shown in American Pavilion. The 1952 participation was financially supported by Yomiuri newspapers.

¹⁰¹ In 1931, Japan planned to construct a Japanese Pavilion. *Kokusai Bijutsu Kyokai* [International Art Association] contacted the Dante Alighieri Association which promoted cultural links between Italy and other countries but failed to realize its goals. Haryu explains, “There was opposition within the Biennale council over the site being negotiated for the pavilion, and as the Japanese war with China continued to expand, the entire plan was scrapped. When a proposal was made in 1942 for Japan to take over the pavilion vacated by Austria, Japan had plunged into war in the Pacific and was in no position to consider it.”

A selection committee was formed consisting of both artists and critics: Hosokawa Mortitatsu (head), Umehara, Kobayashi Kokei, Takiguchi Shuzo, Tominaga Soichi, Hazama Inosuke, Hijikata Teiichi, Masuda Yoshinobu, Yasui Sotaro, Yasuda Yukihiro,

and Yamamoto Kyujin. Their opinions were divided on whether western-style painting was most appropriate for an international exhibition or Japanese-style painting was more appealing to the international audience. See Hariu, "Japanese Art as Seen in the Venice Biennale 1952-68," 21.

¹⁰² Imaizumi Atsuo's remark after seeing the exhibition; quoted in Hariu, "Japanese Art as Seen in the Venice Biennale 1952-68," 22.

¹⁰³ *Yomiuri Newspapers*, evening edition, Sept. 16, 1952, 4; quoted in Hariu, "Japanese Art as Seen in the Venice Biennale 1952-68," 22.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ *Yomiuri Newspapers*, evening edition, 16 September, 1952, 4; quoted in Yaguchi, "The Venice Biennale and Japan," 11-12.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Hariu, "Japanese Art as Seen in the Venice Biennale 1952-68," 22.

¹⁰⁹ Adams, 4-5.

¹¹⁰ Harry F. Guggenheim, "Forward," *Guggenheim International Award 1964* (New York: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1963).

¹¹¹ Fry, 32. Kawara exhibited his one month product of date paintings during March, 1970. A documentary photograph is available in *On Kawara: Whole and Parts, 1964-1995* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1996).

¹¹² "1971 Guggenheim International," curated by Fry and Diane Waldman, was the last International for the museum and the last show for Fry, whose next exhibition in progress, Hans Haacke's show, remained unrealized. Caught between a conservative administration led by Thomas Messer and a demanding group of international avant-garde artists, specifically Daniel Buren, the International cancelled Buren's work. Carl Andre subsequently withdrew his work from the show. See Alexander Alberro, "The Turn of the Screw: Daniel Buren, Dan Flavin, and the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition," *October 80* (Spring 1997), 57-84.

¹¹³ Fry, 32.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Fry, 34.

¹¹⁷ Lieberman, 9.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. Kawara's participation in this exhibition proves that Kawara did not defy being Japanese in exhibitions up until the early 1970s.

¹²⁰ The first of his six pieces of advice was "it is ...an overwhelming advantage for any artist to know English." See Fry, 34.

¹²¹ Fujii Heigo, "Greetings," *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition* (New York: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; and Tokyo: Japan Art Festival Association, 1970), n.p. Fujii was president of the Japan Art Festival Association.

¹²² The first show was held in New York in 1966; the third, in Mexico City; the fourth, in Paris.

¹²³ Fujii, n.p. Among the thirty three selected artists were Jiro Takamatsu, who later was invited to the Guggenheim International, and Yutaka Matsuzawa, whose Conceptual art was praised by Edward F. Fry as a "total unification of art with life" and "a radical critique of all Western aesthetics." See Edward F. Fry's essay, "Introduction," *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition* (New York: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; and Tokyo: Japan Art Festival Association, 1970), n.p.

¹²⁴ Kamon Yasuo, "Forward," *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition*, 1970, n.p.; Kamon was executive director of the Association.

¹²⁵ Quoted from the history of the Japan Foundation on the website, www.jfd.go.jp: "In the late 1960s, amid the mounting need for cultural exchange between Japan and other countries, the groundwork was laid for the foundation of an organization that would be dedicated to international cultural exchange, invested with a powerful system of policy implementation, and endowed with substantial funds. In January 1972, then Foreign Minister Fukuda Takeo announced a plan to establish the Japan Foundation."

¹²⁶ The Japan Foundation mission statement on its website, www.jfd.go.jp, states, the "purposes of the *Kokusai Koryu Kikin*, the Japan Foundation, are to efficiently carry on activities for international cultural exchange and thereby to contribute to the enhancement of world culture and the welfare of mankind, with a view to deepening other nations' understanding of Japan, promoting better mutual understanding among nations, and encouraging friendship and goodwill among the peoples of the world." (The Japan Foundation Law, Article 1)

¹²⁷ Among its activities are a “variety of cultural-exchange programs with personnel exchange as their basic premise, ranging from such academic pursuits as Japanese studies and Japanese-language education to the arts, publication, audio-visual media, sports, and general life culture.” Quoted from the website www.jfd.go.jp.

¹²⁸ “Publisher’s Forward,” *Art in Japan Today*, ed. S. Takashima, Y. Tono, Y. Nakahara (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Book-Store Co for Japan Foundation, 1974).

¹²⁹ Nakahara, 11.

¹³⁰ *Japanese International Art Exhibition* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspaper, 1952), 4.

¹³¹ Hariu, “The Frontier of Contemporary Japanese Art,” *The 9th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1969), n.p. The exhibition maintained a format of two sections for artists’ entries: the Invitational Section was usually composed of artists selected by a committee, and the Contest Section, of artists who went through juried judging.

¹³² Nakahara Yusuke, “The 8th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan,” catalogue essay in *The 8th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1968), n.p..

¹³³ Hariu, “The Frontier of Contemporary Japanese Art,” n.p.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ *Japanese International Art Exhibition*, 1952, 4.

¹³⁶ Takechi Tetsuji, “Internationalization and Nationality,” *Bijutsu Techo* 110 (June 1956): 115. While this perception of Japanese art’s non-international quality seemed widespread in Japan, its European counterpart was not much different. The infrastructure of contemporary art was considered to be weak in Europe compared to the U.S. system.

¹³⁷ Takiguchi, “Words for Japanese Participating works,” *3rd International Exhibition of Art* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1955), 17.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ These works are listed in the exhibition catalogue in a rough black and white.

¹⁴⁰ Among the forty artists were Carl Andre, Jean Christo, Jan Dibbets, Hans Haacke, Jan Kounellis, Mario Merz, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra and others.

¹⁴¹ The exhibition did not include Mono-ha due to the curator’s criticism on the group “calling of nationalism and phenomenology.” See Minemura Toshiaki, “Deconstruction and Repetition of Organizing,” *Mizue* 921 (December 1981): 79.

¹⁴² Nakahara Yusuke, "Contact of Man and Matter: Avoiding Concentration of Trends, 10th Tokyo Biennale," *Bijutsu Techo* 328 (June 1970): 126.

¹⁴³ The selection was made by Dorothy C. Miller and William S. Lieberman, curators at the Museum of Modern Art. The traveling schedule and venues are as follows: April 29-June 13, 1965 at San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco; October 2-November 14, 1965 at Denver Art Museum, Denver; December 12, 1965-January 30, 1966 at Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana; February 26-March 20, 1966 at Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska; April 7-May 6, 1966 at the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio; October 17-December 26, 1966 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; January 24-March 19, 1967 at Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore; April 13-May 14, 1967 at Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee.

¹⁴⁴ Lieberman, "Introduction," 11.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Fry, "Introduction," n.p.

¹⁴⁷ Fry pointed out three factors that made the Japanese sculpture successful: "the availability of a brilliant craft tradition, with its accompanying mastery of the nature of materials; the absence of sharp distinctions between art and the surrounding world and its processes; and the simultaneous emergence in Europe and America of aesthetic issues which address themselves directly to questions best resolved by these last two factors." See Fry, "Introduction," n.p.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Annear, 12.

¹⁵¹ Quoted from Roland Barthes's book, *Empire of Signs* (1970). In the book, Barthes dealt with Japan as a field of symbolic systems. He analyzed the ephemera of Japanese culture such as Pachinko and image-cluttered stationery based on his premise that every small detail reflects the picture called the East. His methodology in this book is similar to one he used for *Mythologies*, a book about French culture in which he investigated individual popular cultural objects or phenomena such as food and cars.

¹⁵² Kawara's date painting journal records realized and unrealized meetings with those figures: "Meeting Y. Tono at M. Ikeda's hotel." (January 21, 1966); "Ay-O brought his cat to my apartment." (March 13, 1966); "Tono, Arakawa and Johns are now waiting for me in Tono's apartment." (April 5, 1966); "T. Odate." (July 9, 1966); "Tony Cox and Yoko Ono left New York for Europe early in the morning." (September 1, 1966); "I met Nam June Paik at the B.M.T. Canal St. subway station. It was 7:40 p.m." (April 21,

1967); “An artificial heart by Dr. DeBakey for Hiroko’s birthday.” (Apr. 21, 1966); “Jiro Takamatsu called me up this afternoon when I was reading ‘Ninjabugeicho’.” (Oct. 28, 1967).

¹⁵³ One of them was Kawai’s studio on Crosby Street, where Kawara often had lunch. Bereday writes of a building on Crosby Street where Kawai had his studio along with other Japanese artists: “The building has tenants in spite of its being unheated and supplied only with cold water. On each floor a Japanese artist has established himself. Shibata lives on one floor, Aoki shares another floor with sculptor Kojima; the latter recently arrived for a visit from Japan and is living on the premises. The third floor is occupied by Kawai...On Kawara, the date painter, is almost a daily visitor for meals; Tomio Miki, the temperamental young artist who was in the United States for nine months on a Rockefeller fellowship, was also a frequent visitor.” See Bereday, 288.

¹⁵⁴ Some of the artists recognized the need to establish a Japanese Artists Association and finally were able to open its first exhibition in spring 1972. See Bereday, 23.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 86. Hiroko gave up her art “in order to take a job in a Japanese company to support the date painting activities of her brilliant husband Kawara.” Hiroko’s early works can be seen in a recent exhibition catalogue of *Neo-Dada Japan 1958-1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of “White House,”* held in Oita City, Japan in 1998.

¹⁵⁷ In Shinohara’s studio, a film was made by Rod McCann but lost the support promised it by the Japanese National Broadcasting Company because it showed the Japanese artists’ disadvantaged lives. The Japanese company feared that the film would discourage tourists from visiting the U.S. See Bereday, 86.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁶¹ Donald Judd, “Reviews and Previews: New Names This Month - Yayoi Kusama,” *Art News* 58 (October 1959): 17.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Sidney Tillim, “In the Galleries: Yayoi Kusama,” *Arts Magazine* 34 (October 1959): 56.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Munroe finds that Kusama belongs to the tradition of so-called “Obsessional Art” in Japan that sought gut-wrenching and subversive expressions of psychological states, fantasy and attitude in the forms of repetition and excess. Its postwar lineage began with Gutai’s proto-Happenings and continued with Miki, Kudo, Hijikata (and his circle including Mishima and the photographer Hosoe Eiko), Nakanish Natsuyuki, Akasegawa, and Kusama. The tradition is a way of venting against suffocating Japanese society, reacting to “the hypocrisy of postwar democracy.” See Munroe, “Revolt of the Flesh: Ankoku Butoh and Obsessional Art,” *Japanese Art after 1945*, 190.

Munroe also interprets Kusama’s obsessive use of nets or phallic images as reflecting her “enraged protest against Japan’s regime.” See Munroe, *Japanese Art after 1945*, 24.

¹⁶⁷ Andrew Solomon, “Dot Dot Dot,” *Artforum* 35 (February 1997): 100

¹⁶⁸ The photographs of Kusama in the 1960s illuminate how she developed the idea of constructing images as her feminist strategy. Some of them uncover Kusama’s deliberate attempts to present her constructs of feminine imagery through the photographic medium. In photographs, she often posed as “the other” and looks at the viewer. Whether documentary or staged, these photographs are critical to understanding how much Kusama was aware of the significance of her body and how much she was determined to confront a milieu in which artistic, cultural, and sexual identity are inseparable. The photographs explore the coded signs of feminine imagery and ultimately seek to transform the codes which were often imposed on her.

¹⁶⁹ Schneemann’s *Eye Body* (1963), her performance in her studio, is considered to be a proto-feminist work because of her use of the snake-goddess image to explore alternative female imagery.

¹⁷⁰ Ono staged *Cut Piece* numerous times. The first performance was at Yamaichi Hall in Kyoto on July 20, 1964 as part of the program “Contemporary American Avant-Garde Music Concert: Insound and Instructure/Yoko Ono, Tony Cox, Al Wonderlick.” The second performance was held as part of the “Yoko Ono Farewell Concert: Strip-Tease Show/sprout motional whisper/Yoko Ono, Tony Cox, Jeff Perkins” at Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo on 11 August 1964. The third performance took place on March 21, 1965 at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City as part of “Norman J. Seaman presents Yoko Ono.” The fourth and fifth performances were offered as part of the “Destruction in Art Symposium” presentation of “Two Evenings with Yoko Ono” at the Africa Centre in London held between September 28 and 29 in 1966. See Kevin Christopher Concannon, “Yoko Ono’s *Cut piece* (1964): A Reconsideration,” M.A. thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1998.

Ono recently offered another *Cut Piece* performance in Paris on September 15, 2003 out of a hope for peace for the war-stricken world.

¹⁷¹ Munroe, “A Box of Smile: Tokyo Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and the School of Metaphysics,” 220.

¹⁷² Inspired by John Cage and motivated by the performance-based events blooming in New York, Ono performed with Ichiyangi, Mayuzumi, Simone Forti, David Tudor, La Monte Young and others. She had a solo show at the AG/Almus Gallery, New York, in July 1961, which featured minimalistic, word-based works such as *Smoke Painting*, *Painting to be Stepped On* and *Painting in Three Stanzas*. Along with La Monte Young, Ono organized a series of performances and environments, consisting of music, installation and dance, at her loft at 112 Chambers Street in New York from December 1960 through June 1961. The participants included Robert Morris, Henry Flynt, Philip Corner, and Simone (Forti) Morris. Ono appeared in a concert with Ichiyangi and fellow musician Mayuzumi Toshiro at the Village Gate nightclub in New York City on April 3, 1961.

¹⁷³ Eric McLean, "Novelty in Sound Motif of Festival," *The Montreal Star*, 7 August, 1961, 6; quoted in Concannon, 12. The Montreal performance was held during the "International Week of Today's Music."

¹⁷⁴ Yoko Ono and others, *Fumie*, exhibition catalogue (Tokyo: Sogetsu Art Center, 1990), 46; quoted in Concannon, 11.

¹⁷⁵ It should be noted that Ono was involved in teaching traditional Japanese culture to students in the metropolitan New York area in the early 1960s. According to Beate Sirota Gordon, former director of the performing arts programs for the Japan Society in New York, "Yoko and Toshi became disciples of John Cage, and started appearing in 'happenings.' It was the beginning of the avant-garde movement in New York, in the late fifties and early sixties, and they were very successful at it. But they had difficulties making ends meet. I tried to provide *Arbeit* for them—that is the German word the Japanese use to describe part-time work. Toshi took part as a pianist in the programs I produced for schools and colleges, and Yoko demonstrated calligraphy, recited haiku, folded origami and performed the tea ceremony at various functions." See Gordon, *The Only Woman in the Room: A Memoir* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., Publishers, 1998), 174.

Ono bridged two art movements, Fluxus and Conceptual art, which shared a proclivity for integrating life into art or vice versa, through her minimalist, zen-like approach. When Ono returned to Japan for several years, from late 1961 to late 1964, she was at the center of the formation of Japanese Fluxus.

¹⁷⁶ The Sogetsu Art Center held many avant-garde performances and exhibitions in the 1960s. American artists such as John Cage, George Maciunas and Robert Rauschenberg (November 1964) were among the presenters.

¹⁷⁷ Munroe, *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, 218. I will discuss the debatable dates of Kosuth's early works in Chapter Four.

Ono was concerned with using handwriting for the Instructions for Painting because its graphic quality might evoke Japanese calligraphy: "I wanted the instructions to be typed. But in those days, regular typewriters for the Japanese language were not available. Only professional printers and newspapers had

typesetting machines. So I thought of the next best thing, which was to ask Ichiyanagi Toshi to print out the instructions by hand. He complied. My handwriting was too emotional, even when I tried to print—it looked like I was asking people to appreciate the visual aspect of the writing itself. Ichiyanagi was able to do a very neat job—close to typesetting, since, as a composer, he had experience in copying his own scores for print.” See Yoko Ono, *Instruction Paintings* (New York: Weatherhill, Inc., 1995), 5-6.

¹⁷⁸ Munroe, “A Box of Smile: Tokyo Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and the School of Metaphysics,” 215.

¹⁷⁹ Takahashi Koji, “Introduction: Forming Space—An Attempt to Trace the Development of Motifs in the Works of Shusaku Arakawa,” *Arakawa: Experimental Works—Constructing the Perceiver*, exhibition catalogue (Tokyo: National Museum of Art, 1991), 302.

¹⁸⁰ Originally from “Profile: Shusaku Arakawa—A Promising Unique Artist About to Leave for America,” *Yomiuri Newspaper*, 27 October, 1961; quoted in Takahashi, 302.

¹⁸¹ Takahashi, 301.

¹⁸² Painting has been a consistent project for Arakawa but he also experimented with film and performance. His film *Why Not* (1971) was shown at the Whitney Museum and another film, *For Example* (1972), was included in the Whitney Annual Exhibition. Arakawa staged a performance in Tokyo in the winter of 1971/72.

¹⁸³ Takahashi, 302. For Takiguchi’s influence on Arakawa, see Munroe, “A Box of Smile: Tokyo Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and the School of Metaphysics,” 220.

Duchamp’s popularity and influence on Japanese artists continued with Shigeeko Kubota. From 1968, she extensively worked on Duchampian themes: one of her works, *Duchampiana*, is an on-going project initiated in 1968. For further details, see Munroe, “A Box of Smile: Tokyo Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and the School of Metaphysics,” 221.

¹⁸⁴ Munroe, “A Box of Smile: Tokyo Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and the School of Metaphysics,” 221.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁸⁶ Bereday, 435.

¹⁸⁷ Arakawa, “Notes on my paintings - What I am mistakenly looking for,” *Arts Magazine* 44/2 (Nov. 1969), 29.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Arakawa wrote, “The more precise a painting or a language (several languages: color, shape, words, etc.) is, the less it exists as itself, but the more it can determine an area of meaning or an unnamable presence.” See “Notes on my paintings - What I am mistakenly looking for,” 29.

¹⁹³ Yokoyama, 55-56.

¹⁹⁴ Kawara made 241 date paintings in 1966, his first year in the studio.

¹⁹⁵ Honma, “On Kawara Thereafter—A Visit to His Studio in New York,” 35.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 36.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 36-41. In the article Honma published after he went back to Japan, he discussed two formal sources for the lineage of Kawara’s new works of linguistic signifiers. For western precedents, he brought up Jasper Johns’ paintings with numbers and Robert Indiana’s letter paintings and sculptures. On the other hand, Kawara’s new works, he suggested, followed the literati painting tradition that originated from the Tang and Song Dynasties of China in their ways of synchronizing painting and writing. Between the two different traditions, Kawara’s originality lay, according to Honma, in the transition process from printed paintings to canvases with “keen colors.” Honma’s attention to formal changes in Kawara’s work, however, ignored the contextual aspect that would reveal traces of Kawara’s past and present in the words he saw in Kawara’s works: “MAMAN,” a French word that he perhaps learned in Paris. His “*Setsuzoku hou—insatsu kaiga no tameno kikaku* [Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting],” written in 1962 in Mexico City, is full of connotations and denotations on the heterosexual relationship between men and women. It is ironic that the formalist Honma was concerned with the ramifications that the work “RED CHINA” would create and ended up selecting “ONE THING” along with 1965 and “VIETNAM” for the exhibition in Tokyo. He confessed the political burden of showing Kawara’s work: “I decided to exhibit his work in the show, “Japanese Artists Living Abroad,” which would be held in 1965 in the National Museum of Modern Art. I was concerned with the word, ‘RED CHINA.’ But in the exhibition, it was replaced with ‘ONE THING’.” See Honma, 41.

¹⁹⁸ The photo accompanies the news of his solo exhibition at Konrad Fischer Gallery in Düsseldorf. See *Avalanche* (Spring 1972).

¹⁹⁹ Lynne Cook, *On Kawara: One Thousand Days One Million Years* (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1993), n.p.

²⁰⁰ Dan Cameron, “The On Kawara Story,” *Arts Magazine* 61 (October 1986): 38.

²⁰¹ Kawara's auto-eroticism was suggested by Chiong. See Chiong, "Kawara On Kawara," *October* 90 (Fall 1999): 59.

²⁰² Honma, "On Kawara Thereafter—A Visit to His Studio in New York," 41.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁰⁶ Some of the subtitles of date paintings are as follows: "Six princes and princesses of Japan's imperial family gave blood for the first time today to promote a national campaign for blood donors." (Sept. 7, 1966); "More than 300 people have been killed or are missing today after two typhoons that ravaged the Tokyo area and southern Japan." (Sept. 25, 1966); "In Hiroshima, about 500 people set out today on the annual 540-mile march to Tokyo where the 13th world conference against nuclear weapons will be held starting Aug. 4 and in New York, almost 18,000 people paid from \$10 to \$100 a ticket to get into Madison Square Garden tonight for the United States Jewish Appeal's Israel Emergency Fund." (June 11, 1967); "In Sasebo, Japan, policemen battled with several hundred leftist students this morning near the main entrance to the United States naval base here as the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Enterprise arrived." (Jan. 19, 1968); "Tokyo was brought close to paralysis today as bands of students roamed the streets hurling gasoline bombs and smashing windows in antiwar demonstrations. Violence also broke out in nearly 100 other Japanese cities and towns as 70,000 riot policemen – 25,000 of them in Tokyo – attempted to control student protests throughout the country." (Oct. 21, 1969); "Japan's highest building, called the World Trade Center, was opened for business in Tokyo today with an elaborate ceremony and receptions attended by more than 3,000 Japanese and foreign dignitaries." (Mar. 3, 1970); "Expo '70 opened its doors to the public this morning. For six months, the festival will continue on its 815-acre site in the Senri Hills north of Osaka, Japan." (Mar. 15, 1970); "The Japanese Government today declared its intention of continuing its security treaty with the United States, which expires tonight." (June 22, 1970)

²⁰⁷ Henning Weidemann, "What is a Date Painting?" *On Kawara: June 9, 1991, from "Today" Series (1966-)* (Ostfildern, Germany: Cantz Verlag, 1994).

²⁰⁸ This mobile setup, however, was vulnerable to accidents. One of his mobile studios, a stamp kit for his several "I" series, was stolen in a hotel lobby in Stockholm in September 1979, which caused abrupt cessation of the postcard series. He was preparing a show for *On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity 1963-1979* in Moderna Museet, Stockholm. The lost kit was returned to the museum but Kawara never resumed the series. See Weidemann, 43.

CHAPTER 3

NOMADIC MIND

Leaving the Light of Greenwich Village

He told me it was “painting.” He sounded like he was challenging me when he said that. I replied, “Is this a painting?” He said that it was a painting with emphasis on ‘-ing’ part of the word. I asked him, “So, you paint this everyday?” He said, “That’s right, this is an endless game. I can enjoy doing this until I die,” and he smiled. I thought he was like an alien who was painting dates day by day.¹

This is a scene from the autobiographical novel by Sahara Jiro (a pseudonym for Miyauchi Katsunori), *Leaving the Light of Greenwich Village* published in Japanese in 1980. In the novel, the curious protagonist and narrator named Sahara Jiro encounters an odd painter, Kawana On (replacing ‘r’ with ‘n’ in the real name On Kawara) in Mexico and later meets him again in New York. Kawana is one of the major encounters in the narrative and is, like Kawara, a painter from Japan living with his wife Hiroko (the author uses her real name in the novel) and quietly carving his niche among the liberals living in New York.

Sahara Jiro is a young Japanese man who drifts around the world with no specific intentions but to be a free individual without national attachments. De-nationalization is inevitable for him as one who would embody the physical and spiritual legacy of modern Japan. The protagonist was born in Manchuria during the colonial period, but he does not remember any details of his birthplace because he returned to Japan when he was still an infant. In postwar Japan, he never feels comfortable or welcome. He begins to dream of becoming non-Japanese by leaving the country and drifting around the world. After saving money while working at the construction sites for the Tokyo Subway around 1967,

he leaves to wander through cities in the U.S. and Mexico. For three years, he works in places like restaurants and gasoline stations in Los Angeles, and then finally goes to New York. Meanwhile, because of his illegal status, he often has to change his identity and even takes risks to obtain fake forms of identification. He first goes to Greenwich Village, which disappoints him because he finds the streets crowded with tourists and not with the bustling life of local residents. He discovers, instead, the East Village, which, full of various races and immigrants, could be a haven for an illegal alien like him. Here, he decides to change his name to Sahara Jiro (the name is phonetically similar to 'Sahara zero,' as if referring to the desert Sahara, home of nomads, to symbolize his own nomadic life), which he thinks would not reveal his nationality. While working as a bartender, he meets drug addicts, prostitutes, artists, and the rich. To continue his nomadic journey, he finally leaves downtown New York.

Before the novel, in February 1972, Sahara Jiro had published a short essay, "A Spaceman-Like Earthman," in *Geijutsu Shincho*.² Based on his actual meetings with Kawara, the 1972 essay described the artist Kawara and his works in a plain manner, using his real name Kawara. Referring to Kawara as "a spaceman-like earthman," Sahara Jiro depicted him as an idiosyncratic artist who lived by containing time in painting or on paper. While the short essay reported Kawara's activities in a simple, personal way, the 1980 novel often portrayed the date painter modeled after Kawara by combining non-fictional details with fictionalized stories. For example, Kawana traveled many regions but always brought along a bottle of soy sauce to satisfy his Japanese appetite.

This story of the peripatetic life of a young man echoes Kawara's philosophy of living and making his work as a universal, non-national or inter-national nomad. The

protagonist's yearning for absolute singleness very much reflects what Kawara was pursuing through his series of postcards and date paintings at the time. In fact, the 1980 novel seems to be inspired by Kawara's aloof, distant, yet migrating lifestyle. At their chance encounter in 1968, according to the 1972 essay, Sahara Jiro was impressed with Kawara's fluent Spanish and time-recording works such as the date paintings, *One Million Years*, and *I Got Up At*, and found the artist again in New York during Sahara Jiro's own migrating. In Sahara Jiro's eyes, Kawara/Kawana lives a strange existence; he is "an alien" who stubbornly records details of each day in non-artistic media, yet he is also a role model whom Sahara Jiro wants to emulate. During his stay in New York, the drifter closely observes Kawara's daily activities; sometimes he has dinner with Kawara and his wife, Hiroko. As the day Sahara Jiro's passport expires and he must leave approaches, he plans to go to Los Angeles and later to Mexico. Hiroko asks the migrant, "What are you going to do after Mexico?" He answers, "I'll go to Panama, take a ship to Europe. From Spain, I'll go to North Africa, and then through the Silk Road I will head to India, something like that."³

Kawara left New York in April 1968, four years after he had settled there, packing and storing all of his belongings in a warehouse. He gave up both his studio and his apartment to finance the trip. As the political and social turmoil was escalating in Europe, the U.S. and elsewhere, Kawara and Hiroko decided to take a honeymoon to Central and South American countries such as Mexico and Brazil, a journey which lasted for a year, from April 1, 1968 to March 31, 1969. Since then, Kawara, like Sahara Jiro, has migrated to places from Stockholm to Paris, from Casablanca to Hong Kong. He designates the next stop "by a combination of will, chance and desire" without any fixed schedule.⁴ It was a

purposeful decision to leave behind his career when it was just picking up. Joseph Kosuth had invited him to join in the first group exhibition of his exhibition space, *Opening Exhibition of Normal Art* (1967).⁵ He had also been included in a now legendary show *Language to Be Looked At* at the Dwan Gallery in the summer of 1967.⁶ Similar to Sahara Jiro, an identity orphan, Kawara needed to be back on the road since New York was just another city to stay in temporarily.⁷

Mexico City

Kawara returned in 1968 to Mexico City, where he had stayed from 1959 to 1962. There, he not only continued making date paintings (his major project since 1966), but also added to his agenda three new “I” projects, *I Got Up At* (Fig. 4), *I Went* (Fig. 3), and *I Met* (Fig. 2), another series of personal narratives. Beginning with the first postcard to Kasper König, the *I Got Up At* postcard series was meant to be a disseminating project, sharing with two people on the other side of the world his more detailed self-observing activities: he woke up, confirmed the time he got up, and stamped the sentence, “I GOT UP AT ...” and the name and address of the two receivers on two postcards before he sent them out. Similar to his *I Read* (Fig. 1), which accumulated newspaper articles that he read each day, *I Went* was a journal of collected Xeroxed maps of the cities in which he stayed. On each map, he marked the movement line of the day in a red pen. The last of his “I” journals, *I Met*, began on May 10, 1968. In the journal, he recorded the date (stamped), and typed the names of people (all or in part) whom he met during the day. Occasionally, the contents of his works overlapped with each other. For example, on September 22 of 1968 in Mexico, he registered the subtitle of the date painting by

quoting his *I Got Up At* series: "I got up at 10.36 A.M." All of the three "I" series ended on September 17, 1979, when he lost a stamp kit, one of his mobile studios, in a hotel in Stockholm. Kawara took the accident as a sign of natural termination and never resumed the series.⁸

During his travels in Mexico City, when he added three "I" series to his daily schedule, Kawara merged his life with his art more than ever. Moments in his life were captured as fragments for the divided projects. He identified art making with living, which consisted of routine and mundane activities such as starting a day by checking out the time he woke up and clipping newspaper articles after reading them. What is more notable is the fact that Kawara had initiated a new series while he was traveling. While meandering through foreign cities, small and large, during his 1963-64 travels, he had repeatedly turned his trip into a search for his artistic identity. This journey had shaped a piece of Kawara's early Conceptual art, a pictorial diary in a large drawing book that contained numerous drawings including "mindscapes" (Figs. 69 and 70) and *ON-Language* series (Figs. 77-82). When his spirit for creating art weakened, it would be rekindled in 1963 in a cave at Altamira in France. The prehistoric wall paintings awakened him to a sense of the role of art: humans needed art as a form of knowledge and information before any technical innovations. It was during the trip to France and Spain in 1963 that he first conceived paintings and drawings consisting of words and codes (in Mexico City in 1962, he had merely written a long conceptual essay). Then when he returned to Mexico City in 1968, he conceived the three major "I" series, which were heavily personal (like the 1962 essay) but more consistently autobiographical, relying on mundane activities.

Kawara's stay in Mexico between 1959 and 1962 was his first venture outside Japan, made possible through the invitation of his father, who was then working for a Japanese company in Mexico City.⁹ Kawara, full of curiosity, devoted the first two years to learning Spanish and traveling throughout the country.¹⁰ His stay, despite his father's return to Japan two months after his arrival, enabled him to have a close-up view of life and art in the country, including people accustomed to frequently late trains.¹¹ He later attended the Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City, a fairly conservative educational program, and produced a mural on the walls of the school for his graduation.¹² During his stay in this country, Kawara had two solo shows and three group exhibitions, including "Pintura Contemporanea de Mexico" (1961) in the Museo Nacional de Colombia.¹³ Kawara's paintings took a new turn in this new environment, perhaps responding to liberty given to him. He went back to Surrealist subjects, in an extension of the figurative and realist style that he had pursued in Japan. But his works became heavily colorful and expressive, indicating the influence of the Mexican Muralist on him. The works, according to Honma in his report of 1965, were "science-fiction-like canvases" and objects covered with "thick splashes of color."¹⁴ One of the works that Honma recalled was entitled, *One Object Thrown Into a Cosmic Space or the Collection of its Fragments*.¹⁵ Chaotic in its composition and color, the mixed-media work surprised the Japanese curator, who had known Kawara's earlier works in Japan.¹⁶ Most of his works from Mexico City are now destroyed and only the titles of Kawara's two solo exhibitions give a glimpse of his Surrealist subjects at that time: "A Strange Dream of Madame Bibi" (1961) and "Eight Decorative Cakes on a White Wall" (1962).¹⁷

Kawara took up writing again, as he had done in his questionnaire in 1959.

Conjunctive Mood: A Project for a Printed Painting (1962) was a long three-part essay and stream of consciousness monologue that consisted of series of sentences which did not necessarily make a coherent or logical sense. Written “behind the closed doors” during his final year in Mexico, the essay was sent in 1965 to Honma, who, having seen Kawara’s work in New York, recognized its significance as “an important bridge for a transition from the ‘printed painting’ to the letters [words].”¹⁸ Honma published it, along with his own essay written after his visit to Kawara’s New York studio in 1965.

During his second trip to Mexico, on the other hand, as mentioned above, Kawara extended his series focusing on his daily activities, recording his wake-up times and mapping his movements for each day. He also began to adopt the local language, Spanish, instead of English, for the date paintings, as part of his long-term plan to distance himself from the centralized New York art scene. His shift of focus to living as art making was a natural decision for someone who aspired to become a “planetary tourist” who would always live “by the present” without any restrictions or attachments.¹⁹

Pictorial Diary of 1964

In 1964, while in Paris, Kawara began to make drawings privately on a daily basis, continuing until he arrived in New York. Not only was he prolific during this time, but he also made a breakthrough in the format of his works that anticipated his 1965 canvas works and 1966 date paintings. He worked on the drawings every night in his hotel after he came back from the Parisian bohemian day life, a life of drifting without a specific job or commitments as other Japanese artists such as Fujita had done before

the war. As he had done in New York, he roamed around cafes and enjoyed conversing with people including Hiroko. She had come to Paris earlier than Kawara.²⁰ He often went to the Café Dome where he spent many hours in discussion with people. He had taken French lessons in order to speak the language. His daily pictorial diary contained some French words and recorded fragments of his observations, imaginatively changing according to his experiences in the foreign city. One night at the Hotel Carlton Palace, 207, Boulevard Raspail, Montparnasse in Paris, he heard a baby crying somewhere and drew a crying baby on a blanket. He sometimes made several drawings in one night, determined to find a final, satisfying image.²¹ Kawara worked as a diarist with “a strong consciousness of time and a desire to memorialize what he has experienced.”²² By the end of late 1964, the total number of drawings reached about two hundred. Most of the drawings were kept in a box with consecutive numbering from one to one hundred ninety-nine (Fig. 71).

The pictorial diary was part of Kawara’s investigation into art and life, a self-imposed task during his long trip from late 1962 to late 1964, which had led him from Mexico to New York, Paris and Toledo, and finally back to New York. When Kawara was in Europe, he sought to discover the origin and strength of its civilization, much like the pre-war modernist Japanese who had aspired to reach Europe to learn the source of western civilization and modernization. In 1963, Kawara took a car trip to France and Spain. Not different from an ordinary tourist, he traveled to popular sites including the Altamira caves. Touring museums and galleries was not a priority in his travel itinerary, but he managed to visit several museums in Paris. However, he never attempted to meet or contact any of the prominent French intellectuals or artists such

as André Breton, who had been influential for Japanese Surrealists, including Takiguchi.²³ Kawara was more preoccupied with his own future: whether to continue making art or not. It is said that it was during his visit to the caves of Altamira that he found an eye-opening answer to the question of why he needed to pursue art.²⁴ The pre-historic wall paintings, as I will discuss further in Chapter Five, seemed to inspire Kawara to think about how time was embedded in the works by cave men and about the fundamental elements—fire, darkness, light and color—that played an important role in making the cave paintings time-resistant, accessible. Art, for him, was integral to human consciousness and subject to the presence of darkness, “obscurity,” and nothingness. He rediscovered *ars ex nihilo* for the future in one of the first works created by humans and took it as the turning point in his journey. When he went back to Paris, he began to draw on a daily basis in his hotel room; the pictorial diary was his commitment to Art.

A diarist’s passion cannot allow events to “pass into oblivion.”²⁵ In this pictorial diary, which was not fully public until 1997, when the Kunstmuseum in Kunstverein, St. Gallen in Switzerland held an exhibition and published a catalogue, Kawara poured out his observations without any reservation, as the project was a private, intimate, and even secretive adventure for him.²⁶ The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue *On Kawara: 1964 Paris – New York Drawings* (1997) disclosed the transient process of putting ideas in the diary, which manifested his preference for working in a serialized format, as he had done in *The Bathroom* and other series. The pencil or pen drawings present both Kawara’s struggle and breakthroughs, as he increasingly turned to everyday

objects, characters, letters, and words in lieu of the closed, psychologically charged settings of his prior work.

The drawing book begins with a word, EGG (Fig. 72), and ends with a diagram or topography of words (Fig. 73). For a while, Kawara clearly maintained his “closed room” impulse, extensively using square or cube formats for sculpture plans. Then a grid pattern frequently appeared, beginning with the no.61 drawing in his calendar series, evidencing Kawara’s slow progress toward his date painting series. Some of the drawings contain personal traces, such as an airmail envelope sent by N.E. Figueroa of Mexico City (No. 7) (Fig. 74), and his language exercises devoted to several English expressions (Nos. 190-194). Among his daily observations are patterns of cards (No. 139, 140) (Fig. 75), the pattern of a flag (No. 119), a typewriter keyboard (No. 125, 126) (Fig. 76), exhibition planning (No. 183), and a schematic plan of Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* (No. 175). He not only used diverse languages, from Japanese to English to French, without any coherent order, but also invented his own language, *On-Language*, on fourteen sheets of paper (Figs. 77-82). What is particularly notable in these works is that he gradually integrated words and sentences into his drawings, and began to frame time in both *Calendar of 100 Years* (No. 177) (Fig. 83) and *Sundays of 100 years* (No. 178) (Fig. 84) during this period.²⁷ The latter two are direct precedents of his later *One Hundred Year Calendar* (1969) (Fig. 7), an autobiographical chart.

Kawara’s use of words and sentences in the 1964 pictures is comparable to traditional Japanese literary diaries, which often incorporated poems as a formal tactic to “break away from the daily entry” and to “heighten the sense of fiction, the air of art, the presumption of literature.”²⁸ The poems in literary diaries—including the oldest, the *Tosa*

Diary (ca.935 A.D.)—were short and swiftly composed, leading to the birth of modern *haiku*. Crossing between fiction and non-fiction was thus an established practice in the Japanese diary; in fact, the boundary between the two territories was not clear in the Japanese literary tradition. Kawara’s pictorial diary follows this device by letting everyday observation be transformed into a creative work. This diaristic impulse, I argue, persists in his later works that he made on a daily basis, such as *Today* series (Fig. 8) and its accompanying journal.

Mindscales

The images in the drawing book include what Roland Wasse called “microcosmic images,” series of topographical drawings that dominate the pictorial diary.²⁹ In about seventy of the one hundred ninety six drawings, Kawara depicted the flow of his mind with dots and lines, creating a landscape that was anti-natural and imaginary or self-reflective (Figs. 69, and 70). Perhaps evolved from the “closed room” type drawings, these pencil drawings, which I will call “mindscales,” appear to investigate traces or inner scenes of his subjectivity. They form a series of topographical settings without any specific name or source. The topographical patterns often incorporate words and sentences in Japanese between the lines and dots. Similar to his “closed room” type drawings, “mindscales” show Kawara’s mental journey, which seems complex, incoherent, or confusing. The labyrinth-like quality of the drawings is, in a way, close to that of his essay *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for a Printed Painting* (1962) written in Mexico, in which Kawara poured out his random, stream-of-consciousness thoughts. The latter, as an essay, covers diverse subjects such as literature, art, and science within the

chaotic mixture of ideas like a “maze in a jungle without an exit,” whereas the drawings depict multiple stages of a wandering mind through broken lines and dispersed dots accompanied with words and sentences.³⁰

In the topographical mappings, Kawara projected his wandering mind and imagination onto an imaginary land, which gradually took a shape from the residue of his thought patterns. His mindscapes are not the products of quick conception; rather, they convey a sense of evolving or development. All the dots and lines are constructs of his psychological process or the meandering of his mind over time. They illustrate his mind drifting from one spot to another, leaving marks from his temporary pauses. The traces of his drifting create a narrative, though not a coherent or consistent story, of a traveler who oscillates between boundaries of words and images. His mapping thus contains the same paradox as any map, the coexistence of “both the sphere of seeing and the sphere of writing.”³¹ It is not surprising that the mindscapes became the basis of Kawara’s *ON-Language* series (Figs. 77-82), which used similar mapping patterns along with words and sentences, mostly in Japanese, French and English. However, in the language series, the stream of consciousness-like outpouring of phrases and words is replaced by a search for the semantic structure of words. I will discuss how he tried to make a map of cognition as a manifestation of his new language-based epistemology, in the next chapter.

While the drawings of 1964 show Kawara in transit from Paris to New York, his *Location* (1965) (Fig. 65) reveals a dream of traveling that came to him while in his New York studio. The liquitex painting, made in New York, consists of a black canvas with a scientific, geographical measurement of a spot in the Sahara Desert written in white: LAT.31°25’N LONG.8°41’E. Literal and plain, the painting is similar to some other

Conceptual artists' works in its use of numbers for the signifier and the signified, but the artist's physical contact with the site is lacking. As if to render a modern, imaginary landscape, far away from the site, Kawara employs the gist of the site, two geographical facts: longitude and latitude, numeric signifiers of a remote place.³²

1968

Kawara's inventions in May of 1968 coincided with political turmoil all over the world in a year that critically shaped the horizon of international politics and human rights. Reading and quoting local newspapers for subtitles of the paintings he did in Mexico City, Kawara was well aware of the political turmoil and student demonstrations in Paris and elsewhere. His entry of a subtitle in his journal on May 14, 1968, for example, reads:

En Paris, miles de estudiantes entraron hoy en La Sorbona, donde todavia no hay clases, y un grupo de ellos, al grito de '¡Viva la Revolucion Cultural China!', colgo banderas rojas en la cupula de la casa de estudios y la declaro 'Universidad Popular Autonoma'.

In fact, he quoted news from Paris for subtitles in twelve out of thirty-four paintings during May of 1968. While he stayed in Mexico City for six months, a violent student demonstration occurred in the country, which resulted in a massacre by the police. Mexico City was scheduled to host the Olympics in October 1968. Kawara, as usual, clipped newspaper articles to cite in his date paintings, creating an archive in storage boxes which, accidentally, became the most important extant source for the controversial news related to the political situation, as the Mexican government later "purged" materials from libraries, newspapers and journals that had dealt with the incidents.³³ His mind was probably full of memories of Japan from ten years before, when students and

other citizens had marched against the unequal Security Treaty between the U.S. and their home country. Kawara's date paintings of May of 1968 thus demonstrate his undying interest in the world political situation although he was far away from home and from New York. Without being involved in any protests or demonstrations in New York or Paris, he chose a relatively secluded life in which he could observe the fast-changing world without attachment. This was an opposite move from what numerous artists in New York did: taking over museum lobbies and streets as their workspaces.

Major art institutions and international exhibitions had to face criticism triggered by the student demonstrations started in Paris in May 1968. The 34th Venice Biennale of the year was threatened by a boycott led by students and artists, who called it a "festival of commercialism and super-powerism."³⁴ Protesting against the police dispatched by Biennale officials, some commissioners such as Olle Granath and Michel Ragon, and several artists including Kowalski, Schoffer, and Dewasne, closed the Swedish and French Pavilions.³⁵ The same year, artists protested against the Kassel Documenta. In 1969, the Bienal de Sao Paulo was driven to cancellations and temporary closings. The Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels was occupied for two weeks by some 250 artists who were demanding artists' participation in the policy-making of the institution. In the fall of 1968, Annette Giacometti, the wife of Swiss-born artist Alberto Giacometti, cancelled the Giacometti retrospective at the Orangerie in Paris, in a protest against the French government's deportation of foreign artists.³⁶

The collective resistance, crossing several continents, shook the established international art exhibitions, which had by this time been recognized as fields of competition and conduits for the exchange of information among countries that wished to

represent their post-war culture. Calling for a boycott meant making a statement that those exhibitions no longer served the artists' needs, but were integral to a political and economic hegemony, which often overshadowed the emergence of experimental arts, especially from non-Euro-American countries. The systematic institutionalization of the art world, across borders, paralleled the advance of a commercial culture that was aided by mass media and a strong economy. As discussed in Chapter Two, the shaping of an international field of art through such biennials and internationals as occurred in Venice, São Paulo, Pittsburgh, and New York in the 1960s engendered criticism that "international" meant nothing more than gathering artists based on their national identity. On the other hand, to reiterate, the selected artists' styles were generally considered to be "international" in their own countries, due to their similarity to art from New York or Paris and their distinctly non-national, non-traditional character. While the concept of internationalism did not carry the same weight in all the participating countries, an equal coexistence of diverse art styles remained just a hope or an ideal. Numerous artists challenged the utopian idea of making multinational spectacles and the idealist view of abstract art as a tool to blur cultural boundaries by uniting artists globally under the umbrella of "international art."

Many artists in New York also began to re-examine the ideological functions of art institutions. By the time Kawara returned to New York in late March of 1969, the city was rife with protests by artists. On January 3, 1969, artist Takis, with the help of other artists, removed his work, *Tele-Sculpture* (1960), from the exhibition, "The Machine at the End of the Mechanical Age" at the Museum of Modern Art (henceforth MoMA), demanding that his work never be shown again without his permission and that MoMA

hold an open meeting with artists to discuss the artists' relationship with the Museum. The Art Workers Coalition (AWC) called for a public hearing and issued "Thirteen Demands" on January 5, 1969, regarding "the museum's relation to the artist and to society," the establishment of an area of the Museum devoted to Black artists, free admission, a committee of artists to be selected annually who would have curatorial responsibilities to arrange Museum exhibitions, etc.³⁷ On March 22, 1969, Joseph Kosuth and various AWC members printed replicas of the MoMA's annual passes, marked them for "art workers," and distributed them in front of the Museum.³⁸ On March 30, 1969, three hundred artists and critics packed into the Museum garden, carrying signs such as "Bury the Mausoleum of Modern Art." By November 1969, the Guerrilla Art Action Group did a performance in the lobby of the MoMA, *Call for the Immediate Resignation of all the Rockefellers from the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art*. On May 22, 1970, a "Strike Against Racism, Sexism, Repression, and War" was organized by artists, critics and dealers (The Whitney Museum and the Jewish Museum complied with the strike and MoMA suspended admission fees on that day. But the Metropolitan Museum of Art refused to join). As organized protests by artists were increasing at an unprecedented rate, many Minimal and Conceptual artists, specifically, became involved to varying degrees in anti-institutional movements paralleling the anti-Vietnam war movement.³⁹ These included Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Richard Serra, Sol LeWitt, Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, Robert Smithson, Hans Haacke, and Joseph Kosuth.⁴⁰

While many of his contemporaries participated in demanding equal representation and transformation of the hierarchy of the art world, Kawara himself deliberately retreated to a simple, nonpolitical and nonsocial life. Despite the contrast to the collectivist political

engagement of others during the late 1960s and early 1970s, his intentionally solitary approach held some commonality with the institutional critique formed by Conceptual artists such as Hans Haacke and Daniel Buren, who also emerged from the anti-war, anti-institutional movement. The latter artists' works overtly targeted the institutionalizing treatment of art in museums and galleries. Formally, Kawara's methods might more closely resemble those of linguistic or language-based Conceptual artists such as Kosuth and Weiner. But, as I will argue, Kawara's critique of the art system in general and of the centralization of New York City, in particular, allied him more with those artists who were interested in incorporating anti-authoritarian gestures into their art, critiquing the standardization and the confinement of art spaces.⁴¹

Kawara's solitary stance continued even when he was in New York. Since he did not wish to have a job out of a distaste for taking responsibility in exchange for money, he retreated to his studio and quietly recorded important events and incidents of the time in the journals supplementary to his date paintings: Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon in July, 1969; antiwar demonstrations in Tokyo in October, 1969; Samuel Beckett's winning of the Nobel Prize in Literature on October 23, 1969; the first flight of a 747 jumbo-jet on December 2, 1969; President Nixon's partial withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam in December, 1969; the stock market crash in January, 1970; the opening of Expo '70 in Osaka; an earthquake in Peru in May, 1970; the French nuclear test in the Pacific in June, 1970. The subtitles of Kawara's date paintings, often typed and pasted on the back of each canvas, completed his collection of "fragments of history," along with the newspaper clippings collected in *I Read* (Fig. 1) and newspaper articles enclosed in the storage boxes for his paintings. The collection demonstrates how Kawara

poignantly embraced the inevitability of being part of history, even when he was in his studio.⁴²

From Critique of Institutionalization to Critique of Centralization

Kawara had been attentive to systems of exhibition in galleries and museums since the late 1950s. In fact, his “printed painting” was his reaction to the consolidation of gallery systems that monopolized opportunities for exhibiting. In 1958, when he was working on the “printed painting” projects, he stated in an essay that artists should find more effective, alternative exhibition places rather than dwelling on gallery shows, which only drew art world insiders.⁴³ He questioned how effective exhibitions within the established art systems could be in the age of mass communication. Given the accessibility of television and films, art exhibitions, he argued, would disappear as they were replaced by those two newer genres. He suggested that the antidote to the loss of direct communication with the masses would be to find sites for art such as books and magazines, which could be delivered easily to an ordinary audience. Accordingly, artists should try to invent art that could retain its originality in published forms. The “printed painting” project was, as Reiko Tomii notes, the ultimate result of Kawara’s “institutional critique,” which questioned both “Art as institution” and the “physical institution of art” with a view to overcoming a narrow concept of art and a too limited contact between the artist and the viewer.⁴⁴

By 1968, New York was established as one of the major junctions for artists and attracted them with proliferating galleries and the artists’ neighborhoods that were growing in downtown Manhattan. Kawara’s escape from New York in 1968 was his

reaction to the city's institutionalization as the global center of contemporary art. Distancing himself from the city, where he had stayed for more than three years, he attempted to return to more parochial regions where he had first enjoyed stripping away the linguistic, cultural conditions of being Japanese. Kawara's decision to leave the East Village was a form of demonstration that he would not be absorbed by the mega structure. It was also a bold and pioneering statement that in an age of information and technical innovation making art did not require living at the center. His use of postcards for the *I Got Up At* series, begun only five days after his arrival in Mexico City, showed that this plan had been conceived before he left New York. Taking his travel routes as his temporary homes and living like a kind of hermit, Kawara reacted to the centralization and institutionalization of the art world in a silent way.

Kawara's extensive traveling coincided with the boom in mass media, airplanes, and telegrams. There was an explosion of travel in the late 1950s and 1960s, facilitated by a proliferation of cars, highways and airplanes. As betokened by Jack Kerouac's iconic *On the Road* (1957), an autobiographical novel depicting his cross-country trip, many Americans traveled far more extensively than ever before during the late 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁵ For artists and others on the move, tourist maps and guides were essential. Robert Smithson's personal archives hold various kinds of travel guides, as well as maps and glossy postcards collected during his lifetime.⁴⁶ Kawara also collected postcards and maps of diverse cities for his subtitle journal and *I Went*.

Kawara seemed to be intrigued by airplanes and airmail. In his drawings from 1964, he depicted airplanes three times: attaching an airmail envelope to a drawing; doing small drawings of airplanes; and including the French word, *avion* in another drawing.⁴⁷ The

subtitles of his date paintings also reflect his interest in news on the tourism burgeoning in the 1960s: “With 176 passengers—only about one-half a full load—moving about in enormous cabin areas and an upstairs lounge, a Boeing 747 flew from Seattle to New York today in the first public preview of what jumbo-jet airline service will be like” (December 2, 1969); “Airline travel entered the second jet age early today at Kennedy International Airport in New York – but only after a delay caused by engine trouble that also forced the substitution of a second Boeing 747 for the plane that was to have inaugurated Pan American World Airways’ trans-Atlantic jumbo jet service” (January 21, 1970); “The Hong Kong Tourist Association is predicting that the annual number of visitors to this British colony will surpass one million for the first time in 1972” (July 15, 1972).

All of these changes enabled a speedier exchange of information and knowledge, of course, including among Conceptual artists. Conceptual art’s international range was more the result of technological advancements in the global spread and sharing of information.⁴⁸ Without much mutual contact, artists in remote places began to make, often coincidentally, works with comparable forms and messages. In fact, critics and curators began to remark on the new possibilities for decentralization of contemporary practice. Critic John Perreault wrote in 1971 that artists were living in an age in which “ephemeralization is rampant,” and information is “more important than heavy matter or face-to-face contact.”⁴⁹ The commercialization of jet liners and the increasingly fast, vast circulation of information facilitated an increase in the exchange of ideas and in the ability of artists from different regions to make contact. Kynaston McShine, curator of the 1970 “Information” show at the Museum of Modern Art, conceived the show—

Kawara participated in this survey exhibition—out of a belief that these new trends would enable artists to become “truly international.”⁵⁰ The changing atmosphere brought artists and the audience into “a stimulating and open situation” that could free artists from art centers such as New York and Paris, McShine suggested, while allowing them to become active without the common protocol of staying in one of major art centers.⁵¹

Kawara’s out-of-New York strategy paralleled the institutional critique of certain Conceptual artists. Robert Smithson, Daniel Buren, and Richard Long, for example, believed that expanding their practice beyond New York, London and Paris was an essential step in the effort to demolish the high walls constructed by the museum and gallery systems. They found work sites in foreign cities and in the outdoor terrains of diverse continents, from Europe to Central America. As the generation of 1968, these Euro-American artists knew the political implications of leaving “home,” and they aspired to escape cultural centers.⁵² While artists like Hans Haacke worked to critique the art system in situ without leaving the traditional exhibition mechanisms, Kawara, Smithson, Buren and others took up travel in order to execute their ideas through site-specific art, art that aimed to belong in or speak of non-institutionalized spaces. They chose their destinations, from Smithson’s use of the Yucatan Peninsula to Buren’s use of Lake Geneva in Switzerland, with a view to blurring the geographical and cultural boundaries between working and showing, home and away, the center and the margins.⁵³ They showed that being away from home was a way of being “self-critical,” and being non-central.⁵⁴ For some traveling would remain an integral part of their work. Kawara, Buren, and Long, continue today to travel intensively for their projects, as traveling

seems to have become a lifetime commitment for them, as well as a constant source of inspiration.

This questioning of the illusion of the neutrality of art within the isolated art space of institutions created a new initiative in Conceptual Art, now called the “Critique of Institutions.”⁵⁵ Consistent with the trends toward critiquing modernist tenets of aesthetic autonomy, and the growing refusal of fixed, inherent or self-sufficient meanings in art, these artists recognized that the conditions of art were ideologically inscribed within institutional and economic structures.⁵⁶ They examined the functions and the status of art in its social contexts, and attempted to explore new frameworks by distancing themselves from traditional venues and making art in non-art arenas—such as the mountains and streets favored in the Land art and urban public art that burgeoned in the 1960s.

In 1969, while Kawara was roaming through South America, Robert Smithson went to the Yucatan in Central America to make *Mirror Displacement*, nine different installations of eleven mirror plates in the wilderness (Fig. 85). To find a “terrain dictating the condition of the art,” he brought twelve mirrors with him on a trip that required him to travel by plane and car.⁵⁷ Once he found the sites for *Mirror Displacement*, he placed the mirror plates into the soil or the ground in order to let “the actual contours of the ground determine the placement of the twelve mirrors.”⁵⁸ This outdoor work was intended to form a contrast with his indoor pieces that had been shown in galleries, including works that consisted of natural materials such as rocks and soil in box-like containers. Smithson once said, “Anything that goes into a gallery is confined because of the room.”⁵⁹ Thus, he wanted to “go out to the fringes or out to the horizon, pick a point on that horizon, and collect some raw material” in order to expose the trapping aspect of confined space.⁶⁰ By

juxtaposing two conditions of art—the site versus the non-site—he revealed the connection between the ‘center’ (i.e., the gallery where the dirt and rocks were exhibited) and the ‘fringes’ (relatively inaccessible areas made visible through maps).⁶¹ On his list of closed spaces were “pictorialized, idealized, artificial, finished” structures such as parks and museums.⁶² For Smithson, the “Establishment” or the center reflected “a deranged mind that appears to be a mental City of Death” and “a political dream world” or “a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.”⁶³

Smithson once called his act that of “unmaking,” a gesture that he realized by traversing a long distance to find material and reassemble it.⁶⁴ If conventional methods of creation constitute “making” or creation, his tactic was the opposite. Smithson liked to show his ideas through dialectical contrast. He illustrated the “dialectic between inner and outer, closed and open, central and peripheral” as it played out around exhibition spaces and customs.⁶⁵ Contrasting the center to the margin, the inner to the outer, the closed to the open, he exposed the political tensions operating within these dichotomies.

Daniel Buren has also raised questions about art and art systems since the mid-1960's, with his famous 8.7 centimeter-wide stripes. His vertical stripes with two alternating different colors (usually one of them is white) have appeared in the streets of Paris and New York, on benches in Los Angeles, on sail boats in Lake Geneva, in palaces, and in and around galleries and museums. Contrary to the suggestion of American critics in the 1970s that his work was akin to minimalist painting, he purposefully pasted or installed stripes on paper or canvas onto billboards or sailing boats, for example, to define new sites for art and to show how differently we look at, and perceive, art in different places.⁶⁶ Rebellious against the institutionalization and commodification of art, he confronted the

dominant architecture of a museum (e.g., with his piece installed for the Guggenheim International Exhibition in 1971, which was withdrawn) and exposed the protected nature of the gallery space in contrast to the space outside (*Within and Beyond the Frame*, John Weber Gallery, 1973).

Buren has used the vertical composition of his stripes to present his idea of creating “no composition on the inside of the surface,” or “a minimum or zero or neutral composition.”⁶⁷ With the repetitious stripes he sought and seeks to raise questions about the nature of painting, which has been rendered neutral by art institutions.⁶⁸ His “painting at the degree zero,” using stripes as a tool, illustrates his idea of exploring other environments in addition to institutional space and exposing the entrapping aspect of museums.⁶⁹ Buren uses the term *in situ* in order to emphasize his work’s faithfulness to its situation or location; thus his work is said to be worthwhile only while it exists *in situ* or site-specifically.⁷⁰

Buren’s institutional critique includes the artist’s studio as well as museums and explores the concept of the exhibition. He has aimed to expose the codified mechanism of creating a space of art, segregated from life. Buren critiques the function of the exhibition as a marketplace. Interconnected with the “economic function of the invention of the avant-garde,” the exhibition is the locus for art as a product on sale.⁷¹ Fulfilling this function, avant-garde artists must continuously provide new products in order to survive. Without consistent contributions and innovations, art might lose its status. By using public spaces and by being specific as to the location of his work, he has attempted to demolish the walls of art institutions, especially those of museums.⁷² Modern museums, shaped by the ideology of the nineteenth century, have three functions: aesthetic,

economic, and mystical.⁷³ The “aesthetic” function of the museum is to form a single, topographical perspective that frames the artworks within the institution. The second, economic function brings a monetary value to the artworks by “preserving or extracting” the works from everyday life. The mystical function is the most powerful function of museums. The museum “promotes to ‘Art’ status whatever it exhibits with conviction.”⁷⁴ Buren takes a critical view of this function of the museum because the mystification of art naturally excludes the significance of the original place of the work, the studio or the site of the work’s conception.⁷⁵ The sanitized, mostly white space for art in the museum cannot include the personal desires and hopes of the artist without screening them through the institution's perspective.

Buren and other artists engaged in institutional critique, however, faced and face a dilemma. By making works of art in and around the museum, they risk being co-opted by the bourgeois institutions of art. The critically minded projects continue to flirt with those very institutions, while seeking to make visible the conditions of the artwork.⁷⁶ Ironically, Buren's work has become one of the triumphs of contemporary art within the institutions that he once wanted to attack. His demystifying project tends to fall into the mystifying operations of the art system. Conceptual art, as Alexander Alberro points out, never succeeded in preventing the devouring commercial power of the art system, as artists were not able to abandon completely the process of materializing the visual.⁷⁷

Although much of the Conceptual agenda was not fully realized, Conceptual artists helped to stir up issues within, and sometimes outside, the established art systems. One of the ways they did this was through writing. Artists such as Buren, Smithson, Andre, Kosuth, Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Ad Reinhardt, Dan Graham, and Sol LeWitt often

relied on writing essays to clarify their ideas without the help of critics. They believed that contemporary criticism, especially that by formalist critics, was not doing any favor to artists. Enunciating the premises of their own art or critiquing one another's art, artists expanded the territory of their conceptual projects to magazines and brochures. While the active engagement manifest in their writings helped to change the course of criticism from the path established during the heyday of Abstract Expressionism, most of their writings targeted insiders in the art community, failing to reach a larger audience. Thus, many of the Conceptual artists were unable to escape later blame that their work had in a way extended an elite, modernist approach to art that makes the viewer powerless and the work unapproachable.

Urban Flaneurs

Kawara's de-centralizing or anti-institutional tactic imposes on him the need of drifting, a record of which can be found in *I Went* (Fig. 3). Consisted of a collection of black and white Xeroxed maps of the places where he stayed, this work uses varied scale of map. On each map, Kawara makes a linear red-ink mark that shows his visits and stops of the day. Rather than listing the names of buildings and sites he visited, Kawara summarizes his movements of the day in a continuous line that often covers multiple streets and avenues in a zigzag. His *I Met* (Fig. 2), on the other hand, abandons any visual signs but designates only the names of persons, signifiers of individuals that he met during the day. On a white sheet of paper, Kawara types the names, in a list which does not necessarily cover everybody he met for the day. As he progresses to non-English speaking cities, the names of the people change, of course, reflecting the cultural crossing.

The two series, begun in Mexico City in 1968, illustrate how often Kawara explored urban places more than the remote countryside and enjoyed gathering or contacting people in those places. The complex maps of streets and lists of names are visual evidence of his contact with given environments and the human beings who live there. If *I Went* freezes Kawara's movements onto a photo-copied map, its pendent series *I Met* emphasizes his contact with individuals who were not necessarily close to him, but shared a moment of the day with him. His list simply spells their names without any hierarchy or preference. The two "I" series faithfully transcribe "abstract time into view vis-à-vis the concrete reality of people, places, or events" through maps and typed words.⁷⁸

The journal, *I Went*, records Kawara's daily whereabouts, visualizing his movement in a horizontal form with a red ballpoint pen on a photocopy of a street plan or a map.⁷⁹ Each sheet has a stamped date. If his moving involved traveling long distances, for example, going to an airport, he ended the red line at the margin of the map. If he was on a ship, as he was on the Queen Elizabeth crossing the Atlantic, he marked the distance traveled each day on a sea chart. When he stayed in one spot, such as his studio, without traveling anywhere, he simply applied a red dot in the apposite location on the map.⁸⁰ By the time when he ended the series, most of his traveling was done in cities.⁸¹ Thus, *I Went* is a record of an urban nomad who endlessly drifted into and around cities with a goal to personalize the city for himself, acknowledging the significance of the place and memorializing his presence there.

Conceptual artists often focused on urbanity as a more "psychological than physical" space, and one that creates tensions among human beings.⁸² Stanley Brouwn, in his *This*

Way Brouwn (1962) (Fig. 86), abstracted and collected the experience of urban pedestrians. The artist asked passers-by for directions and gathered maps drawn by these randomly chosen people. The maps were products of interaction between the artist, who wanted to overcome a sense of dislocation and alienation, and urban dwellers, who were eager to share their knowledge with the artist, posed as a stranger. The maps contained an accumulation of subjective, individual encodings of urban geography, which often showed, in various forms, “the city dweller’s psychological condition of impatience.”⁸³

Douglas Huebler used a map to make a contrast with a photograph of the city or of a site. His *Variable Piece # 4, Paris, France* (1970), for example, juxtaposes a map of Paris, on which a point has been marked in ink, and a photograph of the site that he took himself. The work is an arrangement of a pair of two-dimensional depictions of the place, one emphasizing its geographical significance and the other constituting its visual verisimilitude. In this work, Huebler used a method that resembles a research study of the city and of a specific site within it. This method of juxtaposition emphasizes the difference in scale and location and further exposes the discrepancy between mapped locations and photographs of sites.⁸⁴ Another work by Huebler, *Site Sculpture Project, Variable Piece # 1* (1968) (Fig. 87), further analyzes time within a specific urban space, a process common to many of his works. He selected a place in the city of New York, took a photograph of it and walked toward the place for about thirty minutes. Once he found a point to begin, he turned 90 degrees and took another photograph. He repeated this kind of turning, walking, and photographing until he could not divide the walking time in half any longer. The work evokes a “close association between temporal duration and spatial

expansion” that we do not recognize in everyday life, relying on events and experience of the surrounding human environment, mostly the urban environment.⁸⁵

Although Kawara seemed to be unaware of these works by Brown and Huebler, he should be put, however loosely, in the tradition of the urban nomad or flaneur along with them. Flaneur is a term that has been circulated since Charles Baudelaire’s “Painter of Modern Life” (1863). The concept of a bohemian, usually male individual who discovers and creates in urban environments dates back to the late nineteenth century, when the French poet, who was not only a bohemian but also a social marginal and not necessarily a bourgeois, wrote and lived his life as a flaneur, strolling the city streets of Paris to experience urban spectacles and modernity.⁸⁶ Baudelaire, in his review of the Salon of 1846, praised the aesthetic of the urban transitory, the ephemeral beauty of the marginal: “the thousands of floating existences—criminals and kept women—which drift about in the underworld of a great city.”⁸⁷ He embraced rather romantically, as an appreciator of modern life, the awesome and sublime feeling that an urban dweller experienced in the mundane but remarkably wondrous streets of Paris. The Baudelairian flaneur was thus “a Romantic artist” who found the meaning of art by exploring the crowded yet dynamic modern life in Paris.⁸⁸

Walter Benjamin also attended to the role of an artist in a modern city. In his essay “Berlin Chronicle” (sketched in 1932, published posthumously in 1970), he went back to his own childhood in Berlin and perceived the city during his occasional walks in the streets with his nursemaids and other adults.⁸⁹ Benjamin described the flaneur’s experience of the city as something similar to that of a child who would perceive everything with awe and wonder, similar to the way that Kawara did in the streets of New

York before he conceived the date painting series. Young Benjamin found the streets chaotic and inhospitable, and often felt “exposed to the powers of nature” and “abandoned.”⁹⁰ Benjamin’s “topographical consciousness” registered his experience of the details of urban places, such as their architectural patterns, along with the thrills and wonder that accompany strolling among them.⁹¹ He liked walking the streets and used to rearrange things impulsively by fixing them on maps or drawing graphic schemes, or making a spatial order.⁹² Benjamin’s urban boy, however, did not remain a passive observer like the Baudelairian modern painter who simply enjoyed modern life. He acknowledged his “drifting impulse,” inspired by the city, as indigenous to his living and existing in a modern society.⁹³

Surrealist artists of the first half of the twentieth century also enjoyed what the modern city of Paris offered as fodder for their art. André Breton and Louis Aragon were two quintessential Surrealist flaneurs who found, while walking down the streets and visiting flea markets, the absurd, the mysterious and even grotesque, all of which formed the basis for their later productions. They strolled the city often and welcomed chance encounters and discoveries. Novels and writings, such as Breton’s *Nadja* (1928) and *L’amour fou* (1937) and Aragon’s *Le paysan de Paris* (1926), offer a glimpse of how Surrealist flaneurs experienced the city life. Breton’s novel, *Nadja*, for example, portrays a mad female prostitute, a paradigmatic “wandering soul.” The Surrealist flaneur approached the city more personally and found the complicated life and debris of the city a repository for “the magical, the absurd, the metaphysical, and the paranormal.”⁹⁴

The Situationists International (1958-69), an offshoot of the literary group Internationale Lettriste (1952-57), developed a concept, that of the *dérive*, to describe the

feeling of wandering in the narrow streets of an old city, a concept reminiscent of earlier Dada and Surrealist ideas. *Dérive*, coined by Guy Debord, the leader of the movement, entailed a non-optical but psychological and cognitive apprehension of urban space. For Situationists, the modern city epitomized the late capitalist society's passive consumption of (a commodified) daily life.⁹⁵ Debord and his colleagues criticized Surrealists' strolls as "imbecile" practices and embraced a Marxist critique of the city as spectacle.⁹⁶ They mourned the loss of the old Paris and the advance of modernist architecture and urban planning that sought functionalist, Cartesian, capitalist use of urban space: "Is it illogical or devoid of interest to observe that the district in Paris between Place de la Contrescarpe and Rue de l'Arbalette conduces rather to atheism, to oblivion and to the disorientation of habitual reflexes?"⁹⁷ Debord hoped, emphasizing human feelings over social or scientific effects, that psychogeography would discover and examine "the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals."⁹⁸ Registering geographical information psychologically, Situationists explored the social space of cities. They experienced a "fugitive encounter" with diverse atmospheres and produced a psychological map, which was a non-aesthetic, heavily subjective diagram of locations and directions that revealed social realities and life situations. Taking an anti-art position, they believed that art belonged to the world of spectacle, and therefore the art object was anti-Situationist.⁹⁹

While the Surrealist Breton stayed with and reinstated the reign of painting and the concept of art in general, later postwar movements such as the Situationists International, Fluxus, and Conceptual art proclaimed an anti-art strategy, similar to the Dadaist call to go "beyond art" or for the death of the art object.¹⁰⁰ All three contemporary movements

emerged in and around the 1960s and aspired to utilize the individual, independent existence of an intellectual for crossing the boundaries of disciplines. While the Situationists International stayed closer to the territory of sociology than to art, the latter two movements' cry for anti-art never successfully pushed them past the barriers of art. Fluxus artist Benjamin Patterson, for example, issued his own invitation-map for his exhibit at Robert Filliou's Galerie Legitime in 1962.¹⁰¹ Yoko Ono's *City Piece* (winter 1961) gave an instruction to experience urban districts psychologically: "Walk all over the city with an empty baby carriage." In her *Map Piece* (spring 1964 and summer 1962), Ono gave the seemingly self-contradictory direction, "Draw a map to get lost."

The resurfacing of urban flaneurs in the 1960s was due in part to the flux of material culture and commodification that had begun to affect art as well as everyday life. While some artists, such as Andy Warhol, ardently established artistic identity in the commercial culture, the postwar flaneurs, especially the Fluxus artists and the Situationists, rejected the ideology underlying mass-production and proceeded onto streets and into public spaces hoping to become, all over again, "a powerful symbol of subversion," following the established paradigm of a bohemian urban wanderer.¹⁰² Conceptual artists continued to examine life closely by bringing attention to mundane details and everyday activities such as purposeless walking in the city and intentional traveling from one city to another.

Kawara's idea to record his movements of the day on a map is similar to that of certain Situationists, who elaborated their psychological experience of the city in map-like drawings. *I Went* evokes Debord's celebration of the use of maps and the practice of "possible rendez-vous" in the city.¹⁰³ Kawara's work, however, expands the spatial

possibilities of the city to a global scale. His strolling is destined for international *derive*, which are not confined to the national boundaries and physical and perceptive reality of places but inclined to be invisible and silent. Kawara, in *I Went*, is not the slow stroller who once roamed the streets in European cities but a traveler who utilizes transportation methods such as jet airlines, buses, and ships. His aim is not to capture the fleeting moments of the urban environments but to be constantly on the move as a global trotter from one terrain to another, searching for inter-territorial space for his personal “diary.”

A Nomad or “A Citizen of the World”

On October 27, 1967, Kawara wrote in his subtitle journal “Nomadic people,” a simple phrase referring to wandering people who would never wear any labels of nationality or culture but migrate constantly from one place to another or from one country to another. The entry gives a glimpse of his pondering the drifting life of nomads about five months before his own nomadic life began with the trip to Mexico City. The phrase, written in his second year of making date paintings, is a rare piece of evidence that he had been raising inside himself a nomad who yearned to go back to his home, “the desert” which had originally inspired his perpetual displacement.¹⁰⁴

This constant tendency toward departure was an integral part of Kawara’s identity after his Japanese period. He continuously imposed on himself the task of traveling as a means for liberation or disengagement from the past and from any preconditions surrounding him. Incessant moving evolved into migration, a more perpetual act of traveling. He increasingly turned himself into a migrant, voluntarily putting himself on the road, distancing himself from the center of institutions, and political powers, and

finally becoming a denizen of the world who resided in the space between cultures. By severing himself from locality, he chose to become a nomad, in Homi K. Bhaba's sense, who would unendingly cross borderlines of cultures and places and find ways to connect or disconnect them horizontally and vertically.¹⁰⁵ The nomad pursued a path through illogical, irrational spaces of which nation-state organization would rule behavior of its citizens and aliens.

Kawara in 1968 was not a mere tourist, like the typical modern Euro-American traveler, who would shift from one site to another to reinforce, unwittingly, the boundaries of the asymmetrically structured political and economic systems.¹⁰⁶ By taking full advantage of being a citizen in the so-called first world, that tourist would appreciate and enjoy the marginality or exoticness of the so-called third world as preserved through economic underdevelopment, rather than think critically about the existence of such a divided global economic structure.¹⁰⁷ Kawara in 1962, on the other hand, was the kind of tourist or traveler who wanted to confirm historical or cultural specifics that had been known to him only through ideas and images, as his Japanese predecessors had done during the colonial era. He needed to see Europe, the center of modern civilization, to verify what he had learnt reading books on European worlds, from literature to history, from philosophy to religion, in the Kinokuniya Bookstore in Tokyo. His destinations had enough history and significance to easily explain why he wanted to visit them: Paris, a wonderland for many modern Japanese during the pre-war era; and Toledo, Spain, a city known to have integrated Christian and Islamic religions into its own culture. Different from the modern European tourist who aimed to enjoy temporal solitude away from a

home that benefited from capitalism, Kawara never returned to his actual home, but had chosen to stay at one of his original travel destinations, New York.

Kawara in 1968 was not an exile who had been compelled to leave his home voluntarily or involuntarily because of political or cultural circumstances. Many modern writers, such as James Joyce or Joseph Conrad, most of whom Kawara was aware of, used exile as a metaphor for displacement from the mainstream culture and as an essential thematic of their writing.¹⁰⁸ Joyce and Conrad needed to estrange themselves from their homes in order to critique or expose their limits. As pointed out by both Adorno and Edward Said, being an exile is not necessarily a matter of physical distancing: it is more like “a metaphor for a multilayered investigation of the modern condition” that is used in creative practices such as writing.¹⁰⁹ Adorno once wrote that “the house is past,” implying the suffocating old family compound, and suggesting the need for estrangement from the past in terms of a critical awareness.¹¹⁰ Kawara in 1959 wanted to leave “the house.” Without any plan for long-term migrating, he merely needed to escape home in order to see his cultural identity objectively. Kawara’s departure was not only voluntary, but also deliberate, as he aimed to avoid allowing any single culture to become more significant than another within his experience. For this purpose, he chose a way to be permanently away from home. He recognized that the “home” in which he grew up could not provide any answers to understanding the absurdities and abnormalities occurring everyday. Without any visible pressure from his motherland, the self-taught artist, under the self-demand for constant renewal of his art, needed time to reflect on the next phase of his life. Writing is, for the exile, a new way of making a home in language. During his exile, Kawara often found home in the Japanese language,

appeasing his nostalgia up until 1965 when he made his last known “*insatsu kaiga* (printed painting)” *Composition of Words for a Catalogue* (or *Arrangement of Meanings for a Catalogue*)” (Fig. 88) for the catalogue of “Japanese Artists Abroad—Europe and America” held at National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo in the fall of 1965.¹¹¹

After 1968, Kawara began to lead a nomadic life, residing in the “in-between” space that nullified any bestowed qualifications like nationality. Unfixing the base of his existence and de-sheltering himself, he has questioned the given concepts of pairs such as inside and outside and the center and the margin. In the meantime, home has faded from his reality and retreated into his memory, becoming an abstract entity in his mind that occasionally evokes nostalgia or a sense of comfort. His homelessness is a tactical choice to cross complex borders in a global world that, ideally, supersedes local worlds. For being a nomad would be a manifestation of “the inverse of dwelling or being,” or entail a constant shift of location in order to practice “deterritorialization.” Like a “rhizome,” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s metaphor for a nomad, Kawara has deterritorialized given zones, privileged displacement, and explored the uncharted space that permits singleness or becoming minor without any attachments.¹¹² In other words, Kawara’s notion of ongoing self-displacement resonates with poststructuralist ideas that favor the concepts of exile and nomadism in critiquing modernity. Kawara’s transient “being” is cross- or inter-cultural rather than multi-cultural, a notion that emphasizes the hybridity residing in a multi-racial culture formed by mass migrations of immigrants and refugees.

Such a model of the nomad has generally been positively received in poststructuralist quarters: numerous writers such as Salman Rushdie, Mario Vargas Llosa, Bharati Mukherjee, Derek Walcott, and Isabel Allende, began to be viewed as embodying

“postmodern transnationalism,” which was based on, but also reacted to the model of exile or displacement found in modern literature.¹¹³ These new writers disrupt the equilibrium between dwelling and traveling by bringing attention to a world that allows persistent immigration enabled by constant wandering. They are cynical or pessimistic about national identity in culture and often make parodies of old or new imperial imagery and of local legends as devices for underscoring cultural hybridity. For them, the world is no longer one plateau, unified or organized by either rational markets or nation-states. It merely consists of an atlas of the social relations created by cultural production and reception. It is noteworthy that Kawara’s nomadism preceded the emergence of the postmodern, cosmopolitan, transnational subject, a model that appeared in Euro-American literary criticism in the 1980s.

Yet Deleuze and Guattari’s poststructuralist notion of “deterritorialization” has some stakes. First, since the nomad embraces and subverts binary structures such as major and minor, central and marginal, metropolitan and rural, developed and underdeveloped, it brings a discourse on the colonization of cultural differences to the Euro-American modernist tradition.¹¹⁴ The nomadic disconnectivity is in a way connected to colonial pleasure, the pleasure of invading other territories. Yet its possible root in the Euro-American modernist view of “distance and separation as aesthetic benefits” puts the nomad in the risky position that his/her critique of the modernist tradition of the advantaged traveler might weaken its very own foundations.¹¹⁵ Secondly, the postmodern, destabilized nation-states are risky for the nomad. For the privileged migrants, “homecoming” is impossible since home as they knew it no longer exists.¹¹⁶ Home is not an entity that can be forgotten or abandoned totally. In fact, the very act of being away

entails a notion of home. Without home, distancing is not possible. The migrants' faith in a global network is also tied to a trendy mobility enabled by high technology, which in the end returns the postmodern "citizen of the world" to the economically advantaged, politically irresponsible subject. The global world remains the ideal of those citizens, while the rest of the world's populations still suffer from the control of knowledge and wealth by an elite of liberal, fortunate, nomadic people. The process of bridging the two is slow and might be impossible to achieve, as Kawara's attempts of several decades illustrate.

Models of the wandering nomad are not exclusive to modern European culture. The nomad's need for awareness, for remembering where he/she is, is also manifested in the lives and works of the Medieval Japanese poet-priest Saigyō (1118-1190) and the poet Bashō (pseudonym of Munefusa Matsuo) (1644-1694). The two poets, influenced by Chinese philosophy and literature, chose wandering as a means to live in different periods. In fact, Bashō followed the trail of Saigyō when he traveled to northern Japan.¹¹⁷ Bashō traveled in order to become aware of, and identify with, time, believing "each day is a journey, and the journey itself is home."¹¹⁸ On one spring day of 1689, he packed a small sack and embarked toward Oku located in the heart of northern Honshū. On the way, he wrote poems when he encountered a beautiful natural spectacle like a moon-lit beach near Matsushima.¹¹⁹ The travel was, in fact, only a part of his extensive (with some intervals) traveling to Kyoto, Nagoya, Nara and etc, which began in 1684.¹²⁰ Traveling was a way of passing through time for him.

In East Asian culture, literary figures or monks often preferred drifting as a way to obtain enlightenment. An ancient Chinese monk, Hsuan Tsang, for example, traveled

through Asia around 629.¹²¹ Kawara's traveling is, as Minami Yusuke notes, similar to that of Basho.¹²² Kawara's migration manifests his yearning for living and dying with an "awareness of traveling," as Basho did. In the works of both wanderers, traveling is not just a physical movement but a way of passing through time, a way to "live within consciousness of time."¹²³ For Kawara, who left behind greedy wars and political conflicts, all media news became abstract as he moved on to another linguistic culture, where he had to read newspapers in a foreign language. The less tangible the world seemed, the clearer his consciousness became in his quest to validate his temporal place.

Traveling and art making are inseparable in Kawara's life because his presence in a particular location and time is essential to his works. For Kawara who followed both western and eastern models of drifting, consciousness of the time and place is critical to determining an identity for both himself and his work. Each work is proof of his transient presence and a manifestation of self-displacement. The *I Got Up At* (Fig. 4) series epitomizes his microcosmic perspective by documenting the moment that he woke up regardless of where he slept. The postcards with a stamped message, I GOT UP AT 11: 21 AM, for example, are fragments of his travel diary.¹²⁴ Repeatedly mailing the postcards and telegrams, Kawara becomes "a nomadic globe-trotter" who refuses to be attached to any national or cultural boundaries and keeps destabilizing the borders.¹²⁵ His strategy of destabilizing the concept of the center, New York, helps him to sidestep geographical or cultural conditions and barriers by rendering his presence transient and his stay temporal.

The “Amnesiac” Sender

For Kawara, the postcard is an ideal way to announce his temporal location. First used during his trip to Mexico City, far away from New York, his postcards are his daily manifestation to the world that he continues drifting from one border to another. Stamps and postmarks of local post offices prove the fact that Kawara was in the area. As ultimate evidence of his traveling, the postcard is stamped with a message, “I Got Up At 7:45 AM. ON KAWARA.” Yet, this tactic also subverts the postcards’ mundane quality. It disquiets the recipients rather than making them delighted to see the message. The alienating effect is probably a result of the contrast between two different tropes, communication and tourist souvenir. Lippard early on described the two juxtaposed and contrasting qualities: “one private, one public, one restricted, factual, one lushly expansive, a contrast also apparent between the message and the official descriptions of the images...”¹²⁶

Kawara’s use of telegrams beginning in late 1969 took him one step further toward erasure of the artist’s hand. While he had used ink stamps for the *I Got Up At* series, his telegram series relied simply on the machines’ transmission. All he had to do was to go to the vendor and provide the message and the name and address of the recipient. Yet, the format of telegrams differed from one city to another, which visually evidenced the difference of the locations of transmission. Moreover, the messages were more alarming and provocative than his other works: “I Am Still Alive. On Kawara.” Conceived in New York after one year traveling, the project was perhaps simply meant to let his friends know that, despite his absence, he was well and alive. The fact that the first recipient was Kasper König, his longtime friend and colleague, supports this argument. The content,

however, often startled those who were not familiar with Kawara, leaving them to wonder whether the artist had been in danger or simply wanted to make a joke.

Kawara is not the first artist who used a postcard as an alternative method for art making. Other artists already recognized the accessibility of postcards and other forms of mail as an art medium. Some of the Fluxus artists used to send out statements in the mail. For example, one of George Brecht's mail works, sent around 1962, contains eight word "scores" such as "Egg," "Three Lamp Events," and "A Christmas Play."¹²⁷ Robert Filliou also made a set of ninety-six postcards for his *Ample Food for Stupid Thought* in 1965. However, it was Ray Johnson who stirred the New York art circle with his series of mail art, even creating a "New York Correspondence School," a loose network of his receivers.¹²⁸ Kawara once received an envelope from Ray Johnson who was by then known to be the father of mail art: Kawara wrote in his journal on November 28, 1967, "My letter from Ray Johnson was postmarked somewhere in New York City this afternoon." While Johnson created images of his own to send out in the mail, Kawara used mundane, mass-produced picture postcards for his dissemination of his biographical moment without any formal elaborations.¹²⁹

While Kawara kept a meticulous documenting system for his date paintings, he did not do so at all for the postcards or telegrams. He did not record the times when he sent the postcards and telegrams nor the number sent or the names of the recipients. Thus, the collective display of postcards at exhibitions is mainly the result of collaboration between curators and receivers. Kawara, for his part, seemed to fall into amnesia after he disseminated the message, "I Got Up At..." The "amnesiac" sender is what Jacques Derrida noted in his *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* (1987).¹³⁰ In

this deconstructivist work about writing and sending a card, Derrida describes a postcard as an “Eros in the age of technical reproducibility” that connects two people.¹³¹ The postcard contains the self of the sender, after long agony or fleeting thought about the receiver. Yet, with the completion of sending, the sender is free from the painful or pleasurable moments of thinking and can become “amnesiac.” The sender writes and sends a card to the receiver in order to carry out “distancing of oneself,” the self that he/she is no longer able to bear.¹³² Like the Derridian sender who repeats the act of sending, Kawara keeps sending the message to a designated receiver to let his “Eros,” or his yearning to connect to the person, escape. He distances a fragment of his self from himself.

Kawara deliberately chose the form of a commercial postcard, one with photographs of common tourist sites such as New York skyscrapers or the Eiffel Tower (Fig. 4). The ordinary letter and envelope form would not have served his intention. Employing the format that a traveler prefers—(s)he can jot down some lines and mail it conveniently while waiting for a train or a plane—and using the “found” object common in traveling culture, Kawara accepted and took advantage of exposure of the message in the postcard, which would clarify the identity of the sender and at the same time “depersonalize” personal content. The exposure of the message is probably why Kawara intentionally chose the format of a postcard. The card could plainly make the content ‘naked’ and address Kawara as a sender; it is a chosen medium to represent his self in the world. Kawara literalized his strategy of inserting the self through a moment that Kawara’s life is fixed into a single sentence on a “bordered” space of postcard as well as a moment that a receiver recognizes the message and the sender.

NOTES

¹ Sahara Jiro, *Leaving the Light of Greenwich Village* (Tokyo, 1980), p.83. Translated by Hiroshige Ari, commissioned by the author.

² This essay was republished in English (translated by Sharon Ann Rhoads) in René Denizot, *Mot pour mot: Les images quotidiennes du pouvoir On Kawara au jour le jour* (Paris: Yvon Lambert, 1979), 12-7. Sahara Jiro later returned to Japan and became a professor at Waseda University.

³ Sahara, 170.

⁴ Lucy Lippard, "Just in Time: On Kawara," *On Kawara 1967* (Los Angeles: Otis Art Institute Gallery, 1977), n.p.

⁵ Kosuth opened the Lannis Gallery (and soon changed the name to the Museum of Normal Art) with the financial help of his cousin. Kosuth and his then partner Christine Kozlov operated the gallery. Among the invitees for the first show were Carl Andre, Mel Bochner, Hanne Darboven, Walter de Maria, On Kawara, Christine Kozlov, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Ryman.

⁶ The exhibition was held from June 3 to June 28, 1967 featuring Carl Andre, Arakawa, Walter de Maria, Marcel Duchamp, Dan Flavin, Dan Graham, Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns, On Kawara, Edward Kienholz, Sol LeWitt, Roy Lichtenstein, Rene Magritte, Filippo Marinetti, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Francis Picabia, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Smithson, and Kenneth Snelson.

⁷ Kawara once said that he did not want to die in such a large city as New York. Takahiko Okada, "Presentation of Sign as Action of Recognition," *Gendaishi Techo* [Modern Poetry Note] 10 (October 1983): 104.

⁸ Linda Weintraub, "On Kawara: Self-documentation," *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s-1990s* (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, 1996), 58. It seems fateful that he first conceived the series in Mexico City and had to end them in Stockholm, two different cities that are distant from one another and from his motherland or his home base New York.

⁹ Roland Waspe, "On the Way: 1964 Paris – New York," *On Kawara: 1964 Paris – New York Drawings* (Kunstverein St. Gallen, Kunstmuseum, 1997), 13. See also Jonathan Watkins, "Where 'I Don't Know' is the Right Answer," *On Kawara* (London: Phaidon, 2002), 53.

¹⁰ In the city, he had learned the diversity of life and time in seeing trains frequently arriving late, late enough to come in the next day, and in attending a live orchestra concert. See Waspe, 13-4.

¹¹ Yokoyama Tadashi, "At the Junction of Time and Space: On Kawara in the 1950s," *On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo* (Tokyo: Parco, 1991), 56. Yokoyama suggests that this experience affected Kawara's interest in time and his later series of works that recorded and contained time, such as his date paintings and *One Million Years-Past* and *One Million Years-Future*.

Kawara likes to bring up his experience of a late train in a local town in Mexico to illustrate his surprise at that time. One day, in a small town where there was no train station but a stop, Kawara waited for a train. "Two hours late, the steam-driven locomotive finally arrived. It was, as a Mexican explained to him, the train due to the day before." See Waspe, 18, footnote 5.

¹² Ruben Gallo, "On Kawara in Mexico," *On Kawara* (London: Phaidon, 2002), 24.

¹³ The rest of the shows include *On Kawara: El Extrano Sueno de la Senora Bibi* (A Strange Dream of Madame Bibi) at the Salon de la Plastica Mexicana in 1961; *On Kawara: 8 decoration-Cakes sobre los Muros Blancos* (Eight Decorative Cakes on a White Wall) at Galeria Proteo in 1962; and *5 Nuevos Pintores* at Galeria Jacobo Glantz in 1962.

¹⁴ Honma Masayoshi, "On Kawara Thereafter—A Visit to His Studio in New York," *Bijutsu Techo* (December, 1965): 36.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ "I happened to see a science-fiction-like work entitled *One Object Thrown Into a Cosmic Space or the Collection of Its Fragments*. I had actually forgotten this title but On Kawara wrote to me that I might have seen this work and gave me its title. Then I remembered it. This work was like a canvas-object filled with vivid colors. I thought he had changed a lot from his *The Bathroom* series." See Honma, 36.

¹⁷ Waspe, 13-14

¹⁸ Honma wrote, "...And he [Kawara] has sent me 'Conjunctive Mood,' a project he created behind the closed doors in Mexico City in 1962, which is an important bridge for a transition from the 'Printed Painting' to the letters [words]. I present the entire text here, or rather it [the project] is exhibited on this issue's BT. In his letter, he [Kawara] explains that it [the 'Conjunctive Mood'] is like a maze in jungle without an exit and the repetitive rhythm of drums of the native Indians, which were the inspirations he had during his adventure [exploration] in Mexican jungle. I think you [the readers] will understand the development of [his recent works] through [reading] the rhythm of the maze and [viewing] his work '1965' exhibited in the 'Japanese Artists in Overseas' exhibition at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (Fall 1965)." See Honma, 41. Translated by Hiroshige Ari at the author's request. My note in bracket.

Kawara wrote the essay “behind the closed doors,” probably in a literal sense. He seemed to have agonized over his future not just as an artist but also as a grown-up. *Conjunctive Mood* consists of a series of sentences that sum up, consciously incoherently, what Kawara was then thinking. He migrates from one thought to another almost carelessly or as if he were following the stream of consciousness. He starts with a question, “What is a marriage?” but introduces diverse figures, such as Beethoven, Camus, Aristotle and Sherlock Holmes, to further his migration. The amount of knowledge that he put in the writing is impressive; he covers everything from music, art and literature to philosophy and politics. The essay is like an expression of the state of mind that Kawara was in during 1962; his mind was full of informative and common knowledge, observations, worries and questions.

¹⁹ Denizot, “Painting, or Nothing,” *On Kawara* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Museum für Moderne Kunst, 1991), 27.

²⁰ Hiroko returned to New York in June 1964 and Kawara followed her later in the fall of 1964 after becoming frustrated in his efforts to find an affordable studio in Paris. See Waspe, 15.

²¹ Kasper König told Waspe that “On’s self-assignment was to get five or at least three different ideas per day down onto paper.” See Waspe, 15.

²² Earl Miner, *Japanese Poetic Diaries* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 3.

²³ Waspe, 14. Takiguchi met Breton and other Surrealists in Paris in 1958 while he traveled after serving as a Japanese commissioner for the Venice Biennale in 1958.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Miner, 8.

²⁶ *On Kawara: 1964 Paris – New York Drawings* (Kunstverein St. Gallen: Kunstmuseum, 1997). Kawara exhibited some of the new drawings on several different occasions, but did not make them fully public until 1997.

²⁷ Among the varieties of images, several groups or types are discernable in the drawing book. Roland Waspe, in his essay in the catalogue, finds five types: drawings as “preliminary drafts for large-sized paintings”; drawings as “three-dimensional interventions” for sculpture; drawings for installation planning; “microcosmic images”; and, finally, “ON-language.” See Waspe, 16.

²⁸ Miner, 9.

²⁹ Waspe, 16.

³⁰ Honma, 41. Translated by Ari Hiroshige at the request of the author.

³¹ Tadeusz Rachwal, "The Employment of the Word: Writing, Topography, and Colonial Landscapes," *Technologies of Landscape: From Reaping to Recycling*, ed. David E. Nye (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 88.

³² Lippard, early on, recognized the painting's similarity to a landscape in 1977. See Lippard, "Just in Time: On Kawara," *On Kawara 1967*, n.p..

³³ Gallo, 24.

³⁴ Hariu Ichiro, "Japanese Art as Seen in the Venice Biennale 1952-68," *The Venice Biennale: 40 Years of Japanese Participation* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation & The Mainichi Newspapers, 1995), 24-5.

³⁵ Hariu, who was staying in Venice as the commissioner for Japan at that time, recollected later of the confrontation: "[T]he Biennale officials stationed police in the exhibition areas before the opening. I protested the use of police along with the Swedish commissioner, Olle Granath, two Swedish artists, and the French participants, Arman, Kowalski, Schoffer, and Dewasne. We submitted a statement calling for their removal. The French commissioner, Michel Ragon, proclaiming, 'It is an insult to be assigned by the DeGaulle regime,' did not even come to Venice. During the subsequent disturbance at Piazza San Marco, one of the Swedish artists was arrested, and Granath closed the Swedish Pavilion in protest and went home. All of the French artists except Arman closed their exhibitions. As a result, I was pressured from both sides, some people demanding, 'Close the pavilion!' and others insisting, 'If you close the Japanese Pavilion it will be the end of the Biennale! Don't do it no matter what.' In this charged atmosphere I even overheard someone whisper, 'That man in the beard is a key person,' while walking through Piazza San Marco. I talked over the situation with the four Japanese artists. Takamatsu and Miki said they would leave everything up to me. Sugai and Yamaguchi said they did not want the pavilion closed because they had come to Venice at their own expense and did not have many opportunities to show their work in Europe. It was not possible to close off part of the Japanese Pavilion because of the open layout described above, so I decided to leave it open." See Hariu, 24-5.

³⁶ Mary Ann Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 268.

³⁷ Among the members were Carl Andre, Robert Morris, Willoughby Sharp, Gregory Battcock, Hans Haacke, and Eugene Tsai etc.

³⁸ Staniszewski, 265.

³⁹ Kozloff speaks of the time: "As far as artists' protest was concerned, this was an age of dread and grandiosity; there's been nothing like it since. The names of the shifting

configurations convey some of the flavor—‘The Art Workers Coalition,’ ‘The Emergency Cultural Government,’ ‘The New York Art Strike.’ The activities ranged from symbolic acts to unconditional demands for a—really impossible—politicization of museums. The ante was raised higher each time there were new massacres and bombings in Vietnam.” See Amy Newman, *Challenging Art: Artforum 1962-1974* (New York: Soho Press, Inc., 2000), 265.

⁴⁰ For Leider’s and Lippard’s detailed descriptions about artists such as Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra, and Joseph Kosuth, see Newman, 268 and 304.

⁴¹ Blake Stimson, “The Promise of Conceptual Art,” *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), xxxix.

⁴² Waspe, 15.

⁴³ Kawara, “Questions on One Original Painting,” *Bijutsu Techo* (April, 1958): 24-5.

⁴⁴ Reiko Tomii, “Concerning the Institution of Art: Conceptualism in Japan,” *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 18.

⁴⁵ See Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York: Viking, 1997) for further information.

⁴⁶ Ann Morris Reynolds, “Robert Smithson: Learning from New Jersey and Elsewhere,” Ph.D. dissertation, The Graduate Center, the City University of New York, 1993, 2. This dissertation was later published as a book under the same title by MIT press in 2003.

⁴⁷ Minami Yusuke, “Travel and Time,” *On Kawara—Whole and Parts 1964 – 1995* (Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 1998), 39.

⁴⁸ John Perreault, “It’s Only Words,” *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), 138, reprinted from *The Village Voice*, May 20, 1971.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁵⁰ Kynaston McShine, *Information* (New York: MoMA, 1970), exhibition catalogue, July 2-Sept. 20, 1970, 140.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Lucy Lippard, “Breaking Circles: the Politics of Prehistory,” *Robert Smithson: Sculpture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981), 35.

⁵³ The notion of extending sites of and for art began to include sites of information and documentation such as art magazines. The current understanding of the concept of site in contemporary art embraces all possible sites, including conceptual and discursive ones. According to Miwon Kwon, some Conceptual artists' works have expanded to a level where the site is no longer immovable and fixed, but dematerialized, even anti-visual, such as the "sites" of homelessness or of sexism. See Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity," *October* 80 (Spring 1997), 110.

⁵⁴ Reynolds, 3.

⁵⁵ See Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (Winter 1990), 136.

⁵⁶ Kwon, 86-89.

⁵⁷ Patricia Norvell, "Robert Smithson, June 20, 1969," *Recording Conceptual Art: Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelau, Smithson, Weiner by Patricia Novell*, ed. by Alexander Alberro and Patricia Norvell (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2001), 124.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 127.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Lippard, "Breaking Circles: the Politics of Prehistory," 32.

⁶² Ibid., 39.

⁶³ Ibid., 37. Lippard did not cite here the exact source, but in her first footnote, she provided two sources that she used frequently: *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York University Press, 1979), and a 1969 interview with Patsy Norvell in Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object* (New York: Praeger, 1973).

⁶⁴ Norvell, 125.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 127. For the concept of *Site/Nonsite*, he even made a list of pair properties. See Lawrence Alloway, "Sites/Nonsites," *Robert Smithson: Sculpture, Ithaca and London* (Cornell University Press, 1981), 43.

⁶⁶ The U.S. critics' perception of Buren's work in the 1970s generally failed to grasp the core of his intention. Most of them viewed his work as failed painting that collapsed

into the environment: see Roberta Smith, "On Daniel Buren," *Artforum* 12 (September 1973): 66-7; and Elizabeth C. Baker, "Critics Choice: Daniel Buren," *Artnews* (March 1971): 25+.

⁶⁷ Buren, "Beware," *Five Texts* (London and New York: John Weber Gallery and Jack Wendler Gallery, 1973), 13.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁹ Baker, 25; and Jeffrey Deitch, "Daniel Buren: Painting Degree Zero," *Arts Magazine* 51 (October 1976), 89.

⁷⁰ Jean-François Lyotard, "The Works and Writing of Daniel Buren: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Contemporary Art," *Artforum* (February 1981): 56. The re-creation or re-fabrication of early site-specific works in exhibitions provides cause for doubt regarding the validity of certain claims associated with the movement toward site-specificity. Once intended to criticize the commercialization and institutionalization of art, early site-specific works such as Richard Serra's *Splash Piece: Casting* (1969-1970) are being absorbed into the institution and are being re-created in a new context where the site is no longer outside the institution and the viewer is provided by the institution. See Kwon, 97.

⁷¹ Buren, "The function of an exhibition," *Studio International* 186/961 (December, 1973): 216.

⁷² Buren, "Function of the Museum," *Artforum* 12 (September 1973): 69. Here he wrote, "Whether the place in which the work is shown imprints and marks this work, whatever it may be, or whether the work itself is directly-consciously or not-produced for the Museum, any work presented in that framework, if it does not explicitly examine the influence of the framework upon itself, falls into the illusion of self-sufficiency-or idealism."

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ The institutional critique anticipates Brian O'Doherty's argument about the sanitized, magical modern museums in *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica: the Lapis Press, 1986). O'Doherty wrote, "[t]he white cube is usually seen as an emblem of the estrangement of the artist from a society to which the gallery also provides access. It is a ghetto space, a survival compound, a proto-museum with a direct line to the timeless, a set of conditions, an attitude, a place deprived of location, a reflex to the bald curtain wall, a magic chamber, a concentration of mind, maybe a mistake...It is mainly a formalist invention, in that the tonic weightlessness of

abstract painting and sculpture left it with a low gravity. Its walls are penetrable only by the most vestigial illusionism.”(80)

⁷⁶ Douglas Crimp, “The End of Painting,” *October* 16 (Spring 1981): 72.

⁷⁷ Alexander Alberro, “Introduction: At the Threshold of Art as Information,” *Recording Conceptual Art: Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelaub, Smithson, Weiner* by Patricia Novell, 12.

⁷⁸ Anne Rorimer, “The Date Paintings of On Kawara,” *Museum Studies* 17/2 (1991): 135.

⁷⁹ Ulrich Wilmes, “The Artist’s Life,” *On Kawara: Horizontality/Verticality* (Muchen: Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus and Koln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Konig, 2000), 14.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Timothy Nye, “Conceptual Art: A Spatial Perspective,” *The Power of the City/The City of Power*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992), 13.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ He continued to apply a similar strategy in other works such as *Variable Piece # 1, New York City* (1968), *Variable Works (in Progress)/Düsseldorf, Germany-Turin, Italy* (1970-71).

⁸⁵ Nye, 13.

⁸⁶ Christel Hollevoet, “The Flaneur: Genealogy of a Modern Icon,” Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2001, 433.

⁸⁷ Hollevoet, “Wandering in the City *Flanerie to Derive* and After: the Cognitive Mapping of Urban Space,” *The Power of the City/ The City of Power*, 25; organized by three students in the 1991-92 Whitney Museum Independent Study Program: Christel Hollevoet, Karen Jones, and Timothy Nye.

⁸⁸ Hollevoet, “The Flaneur: Genealogy of a Modern Icon,” 433.

⁸⁹ The essay was published as *Berliner Chronik*, ed. Gershom Schlem (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970).

⁹⁰ “A Berlin Chronicle,” *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 2 1927-1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone and others (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 597.

⁹¹ Peter Demetz, “Introduction,” in *Reflections*, xvii; quoted in Christel Hollevoet, “The Flaneur: Genealogy of a Modern Icon,” 415.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Hollevoet, “Wandering in the City *Flanerie* to *Derive* and After: the Cognitive Mapping of Urban Space,” 28.

⁹⁴ Hollevoet, “The Flaneur: Genealogy of a Modern Icon,” 416.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 475.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 476.

⁹⁷ Debord, “Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,” 1955; reprint in Ken Knabb, ed., *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), 5; quoted in Christel Hollevoet, “The Flaneur: Genealogy of a Modern Icon,” 478. Debord’s writings such as *Society of the Spectacle* (1957), *The Naked City* (1957) and *Guide psychogéographique de Paris* (1957) reveal that he preferred experimental, poetic *dérive* in an old city.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Hollevoet, “The Flaneur: Genealogy of a Modern Icon,” 484.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 477.

¹⁰¹ Hollevoet, “Wandering in the City *Flanerie* to *Derive* and After: the Cognitive Mapping of Urban Space,” 33-6.

¹⁰² Hollevoet, “The Flaneur: Genealogy of a Modern Icon,” 476.

¹⁰³ Hollevoet, “Wandering in the City *Flanerie* to *Derive* and After: the Cognitive Mapping of Urban Space,” 42.

¹⁰⁴ Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996), 66. This book explores historical “constructs of modern displacement” such as “leisure travel, exploration, expatriation, exile, homelessness, and immigration.” (3).

¹⁰⁵ The concept of borderline is borrowed from Homi K. Bhabha: "...the borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of continuum of past and present...it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present." Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 7.

¹⁰⁶ Kaplan, 63. See also Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976); Donald Horne's *The Greatest Museum: The Re-Presentation of History* (1984).

¹⁰⁷ Kaplan, 58. The modern tourist manifests "high culture's fascination with singular, elite figures of travel" and contributes to the development of international tourism and sightseeing. See Kaplan, 5.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁹ See Edward Said's "Reflections on Exile"; quoted in Kaplan, 117. Said further used the model of exile for global, mass immigration and refuge to embrace postmodern definitions of diaspora.

¹¹⁰ *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: NLB, 1978), 38-9.

¹¹¹ *Arrangement of Meanings for a Catalogue* is a direct translation of the original Japanese title. The English title, *Composition of Words for a Catalogue*, was from the catalogue *Japanese Artists Abroad—Europe and America* (Tokyo: the National Museum of Modern Art, 1965), n.p. See Chapter Four for the detail of the work.

¹¹² I understand Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's "rhizome" as a metaphor for nomadic modes of crossing borders out of resistance to belongingness. Based on their argument, "[a] rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance" (*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987], 25), I follow Kaplan's interpretation that the "rhizome" is a tendency of "destabiliz[ing] the conventions of origins and endings," and of "constitut[ing] an anarchic relationship to space and subjectivity, resistant to and undermining the nation-state apparatus." See Kaplan, 86-7.

¹¹³ Kaplan, 123.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 88-9.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 94. She finds the point in discussing Winifred Woodhull's article "Exile" in *Yale French Studies* (1993).

¹¹⁶ Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 5.

¹¹⁷ It is noteworthy to see the contemporary western followers who traced the routes of Basho. Among them are Lesley Downer (*On the narrow road: journey into a lost Japan*, Summit Books, 1989) and Sam Hamill (*Basho's Ghost*, Broken Moon Press, 1989).

¹¹⁸ Basho, *Oku no hosomichi* (the narrow road within), 1690-1694; quoted in Sam Hamill, *Basho's Ghost*, 1.

¹¹⁹ Hamill, 11.

¹²⁰ Basho always wrote a journal or travel diary after his travel. Some of them are *Journey of a Weather-beaten Skeleton* (1684-5), *A Visit to Kashima Shrine* (1687), and *Oku no hosomichi* (the narrow road within) (1690-1694).

¹²¹ Richard Bernstein, *Ultimate journey: retracing the path of an ancient Buddhist monk who crossed Asia in search of enlightenment* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2001).

¹²² Minami, 41.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Minami categorizes Kawara's work as "travel diary." Ibid.

¹²⁵ Karel Schampers, "A Mental Journey in Time," *On Kawara: Date Paintings in 89 Cities*, (Rotterdam: Museum Boyman-van-Beningen, 1991), 199.

¹²⁶ Lippard, "Just in Time: On Kawara," n.p.

¹²⁷ From the checklist for the show, *The Book is in the Mail: the postal system as used by Eleanor Antin, Beorge Brecht, Buster Cleveland, Commonpress, Peter Faecke, Robert Filliou, Henry Flynt, Gilbert & George, Guerilla Art Action Group, Ray Johnson, On Kawara, George Maciunas, Omnibus News, Meiko (Chieko) Shiomi, Daniel Spoerri, Roland Topor, Wolf Vostell, Robert Watts* (New York: Bound & Unbound, 1990), 2.

¹²⁸ David Bourdon, "Cosmic Ray: An Open Letter to the Founder of the New York Correspondence School," *Art in America* (October 1995), 108.

¹²⁹ Wilmes, "The Artist's Life," 14.

¹³⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, tran. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 19.

¹³¹ Ibid., 12-3.

¹³² Ibid., 357.

CHAPTER 4

LANGUAGE AND BEING

Language as the Site of Subjectivity

Language functions in multiple, complex ways in Kawara's art. For "language provides the very definition of man"¹ by enabling communication between human beings, and by representing the identity of the speaker, it is not only a means to declare one's existence but also an effective tool to inscribe one's subjectivity in terms of race, sex and gender.² Language is a means of traversing borders for Kawara, as well as of constructing a home for his self and subjectivity. His use of local language makes visible issues of cultural specificity but his attraction to Esperanto or numerical numbers universalizes the difference of cultures. Language has facilitated his move from the center to the margin, and his intentional transformation from a Japanese artist to a "citizen of the world."³ He has embraced language as an alternative to figurative imagery. Thus, his language-based works often reveal his subjectivity, emphasizing the singular self over the collective. While Kawara's critics often note the linguistic element in his work, they usually dwell on issues such as the "ethereal" and "enigmatic" quality that resembles the *kenyogen* word—double-meaning word—in a *Haiku* poem,⁴ and language as the "central mediating framework between 'art' and 'life'" that records and disseminates fragments of daily life.⁵ This line of inquiry, however, does not reveal the fact that Kawara has practiced a consistent and systematic reconsideration of language as a site of authorship and subjectivity. This inattention may stem from the fact that most of Kawara's works made in Japanese remain unknown to, and un-translated for English-speaking critics so far.

Experiments with diverse linguistic modes and conventions were frequent in Kawara's early period in Japan. In 1952, he began to sign his early paintings and drawings in *katakana*, a Japanese language system reserved for foreign adopted words, as opposed to *hirakana*, which the Japanese use for their original, indigenous words. He often reversed his name in the Euro-American way—the opposite of Japanese convention, in which the last name precedes the first. This use of non-Japanese customs and language paralleled his shortening of his own last name from Kawahara to Kawara, and his reexamination of a postwar identity of Japan, exemplified by his participation in the “Nippon Ten.” He used French in the text inserted in the “printed painting” No.1, *Painting and Human*, an indication that he was attempting to communicate with an audience outside Japan—probably the one in Paris, the city that was still attracting postwar Japanese artists, especially in the 1950s.⁶

From his reader-response project, *The Meaning and the Directions of the Questionnaire*, (1959) to his later “I” series, his oeuvre manifested a gradual change in his use of language—relying on and sometimes subverting the traditional linguistic and literary norms and conventions. *The Meaning and the Directions of the Questionnaire* explored the possibility of using words for interactive works. His essay *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting* (1962) undermined existing literary boundaries to make a hybrid form that could reflect his personal narrative by mixing poetry excerpts, scientific observations, and historical details in a rather incoherent manner. This essay was Kawara's attempt to create a home in his mother tongue while traveling in Mexico by pouring out his intellectual and emotional struggles. The *ON-Language* series included in his 1964 drawing book was a product of Kawara's gradual realization that

linguistic hybridity was an inevitable result of being exposed to non-Japanese, alphabet-based languages. He began the subtitle journal of date paintings like a diary, with personal notes and observations. However, Kawara gradually moved on to erase the personal from the journal, especially after 1969, reducing microscopic personal information in his several codified “I” series.

Kawara’s gradual adaptation to an alphabet-oriented culture paralleled the progression of his traveling. Language became not only the site in which his identity could be affected and constructed, but also functioned to connect his home of Japan to, and at the same time to disconnect from, other places. Extensive migrating thus enabled Kawara to realize the cultural weight inherent in written and spoken languages. As long as language functions as site of individual identity or cultural identity, the hypothesis of individual absolute autonomy collapses. When he gained access to an alphabet-keyboard typewriter, he sent letters typed in English to his artist friends, such as Ikeda Tatsuo in Japan, while he was in Mexico.⁷ During his stay in Paris in 1964, Kawara spoke French with the help of a Japanese guide and French tutor. Living like a typical Parisian bohemian artist, enjoying idling and talking in cafés, he even spoke French with a Japanese friend.⁸ When someone approached him one day in his favorite café and asked him why he spoke French with another Japanese, he replied in French, “Because we are in Paris.”⁹ Early in 1970, Esperanto replaced Japanese and other non-alphabet-based languages in his signature series, date painting. He made an entry in his journal and made a date painting in Esperanto—language designed for universal need but yet unpopular universally—when he visited Japan in late December of 1970 after twelve years of absence.¹⁰ These measured cultural adaptations or translations seemed to expose the contradiction in

searching for the individual in relation to language. Since the issue of identity is unavoidably linked to a specific time, a place, and culture, the hope of a universal language often remains unfulfilled, as explored by later conceptualists such as Antoni Muntadas.

Art as Communication: “Printed Painting”

Kawara’s inquiry into new, alternative communicative methods dates back to his Japanese period, specifically his final three years there. In the article “Conception and Proposal of Printed Paintings” (Spring 1959), he asked, “What is communication? What does it mean to draw?”¹¹ After examining briefly the history of the term, “communication,” Kawara argued that communication was not “unilateral conveyance” but “a process of mutual exchange.”¹² The ideal model of an equal transmission of messages between two parts—a sender and a receiver—was what Kawara wanted to explore in his art. Based on the premise that art as communication requires two poles (an artist and a viewer), he contended that art would be only complete when the audience experienced an artwork and created its own imaginative product. The supposed incomprehensibility of art was due to the common view that “an artist produces and the audience consumes.”¹³ Conscious of the criticism that contemporary art was distant from the masses, Kawara argued further in the essay that understanding the role of the audience as a passive agent would limit its potential to engage in art as a creative experience. Quoting Okamoto Taro’s dictum, “appreciation is creation,” and anticipating Roland Barthes’s credo about the “death of the author” being coincident with the “birth

of the reader,” Kawara encouraged active appreciation that could reverse the roles between artist and audience: the audience as creator or the artist as audience.¹⁴

This “mutual exchange” between the two agents was put into practice when Kawara invited the readers of *Bijutsu Techo* to complete his questionnaire for *The Wrath of the Colony* (1958) (Fig. 89), one of his “printed paintings.” The questionnaire, along with his brief introductory statement, was published with the “Conception and Proposal of Printed Paintings” in the same issue of *Bijutsu Techo*. In the statement, he defined art as “a form of communication” and emphasized the need for “interaction” to replicate the “mysterious inner process of the original creation by the artist” in the imagination of the audience.¹⁵ Although his intention was to “capture how the viewers reject, overcome, and create a new substance through my work as a clue,” he intentionally abandoned the scientific, rational, and modern polling method, which he did not trust to measure “a sensuous territory of the viewer.”¹⁶ Instead, he formulated a new method that he believed would detect a delicate territory of perception. He collected words and phrases that he believed would be more effective to communicate with ordinary viewers. Based his idea on the assumption that viewers have undeveloped imaginations waiting to be discovered, Kawara asked the readers to take a close look at the inserted color “printed painting,” *The Wrath of the Colony*, a close-up image of a monster screaming (Fig. 21), and then choose a phrase that “represents best the image or substance” that the reader created by looking at his work from a list of phrases that he randomly selected before sending the answer to him. In fact, Kawara’s random arrangement of phrases was not much different from the poems by Guillaume Apollinaire, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Jean Cocteau, Tristan Tzara, Andre Breton, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Compt de Lautréamont that Kawara

used.¹⁷ The viewers, he explained in a surprisingly didactic tone, were given the freedom to reduce the artwork to just “a piece of paper” or to make it a serious work; they could ignore the expression that the artist intended for their own purposes.¹⁸ Kawara argued that his intention was to encourage the viewers to imagine something from the artwork, as the artist would find inspirations from things like mere stains on the wall. The viewer’s choice of phrases, he wrote, would reveal “an approximate [embodiment] of the image created in your mind,” thus making the viewers artists, and ultimately revealing Kawara’s idea that “the artist is not a special human being, and that everyone can become an artist.”¹⁹ This view of creating interactive, everyday, accessible art was repeated in his strategic use of media, such as postcards and telegrams.

Kawara’s hope to attract viewers seemed successful. Almost 145 people responded to his questionnaire, and Kawara thanked them in an advertisement that announced the forthcoming “printed painting” No.4, *Western Fortress*:

Later, many responses came, and as of April 1, the number of letters reached 145. Letters are still coming in and the author would like to appreciate the response [the readers’ letters]. I will publish the details later. As a way of appreciation, I have sent printed painting No.1, *Painting and Human* to ten people. Please keep in touch. On Kawara.²⁰

In the ad, he indicated that he would publish the results of the responses, a project he never realized: by the end of the same year, he was on a plane to Mexico via Seattle. Although his ambition to test his viewers’ response was not a failure, it is questionable how the randomly chosen poetic words could overcome the static, mathematical, statistics-oriented form of the questionnaire. The fragmented and ambiguous phrases fail to evoke any specific images, despite his claim that those verses would trigger creativity hidden in the viewer’s mind. Nevertheless, the viewer-engaged project heralded his first

shift to language as medium, which preceded later poll-based works like Hans Haacke's *Milwaukee Visitors' Profile* (1969-70) (Fig. 90), which also asked the audience to respond to a questionnaire, this one containing questions about the respondents' personal information, such as marital status, and of family members, to analyze museum-goers' profiles.

Kawara's departure to Mexico interrupted his art business but did not stop his "printed painting" projects, as evident in the subtitle of his work made in Mexico, *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting* (1962). After he left Japan, however, Kawara's argument for "multiple originals" for the masses did not gain much understanding or much of a following, and most of his "printed paintings" had been forgotten or deteriorated in private collections.²¹

Kawara's consideration of the nature of art through the concept of communication has, as Minemura points out, a two-fold effect.²² First, it drove Kawara to re-examine further the linguistic communication system in general, specifically codes and signs—an investigation which led to his friendship with Joseph Kosuth, who also questioned the fundamental structure of the visual and favored linguistic representation. On the other hand, neither Kawara's call for viewer-participation in his projects nor his emphasis on communication was new. Rather, his approach to the issue of communication seems to reveal its contradictory aspects. While he emphasized the role of viewers in the process of communication in a rather naïve manner without realizing that the artist was, in fact, the center of all the process from the very act of framing the project to collecting responses, Kawara eventually highlighted the location of his art between the two agents, and ended up imposing on him a burden to communicate with his audience endlessly.²³

Nevertheless, it seemed that Kawara was increasingly drawn into the needs to destruct common communicative modes and to search for non-conventional means of communication between artist and viewer.²⁴ The questionnaire for *The Wrath of the Colony* was only the beginning of the destruction process.

Conjunctive Mood, 1962

Kawara's intentional destruction of logical communication reached its highest point in *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting* (1962), an essay that he wrote in Mexico in Japanese.²⁵ The essay is an intermediary language-based work that gives a glimpse of Kawara's increasing interest in the medium of language before his multiple full-scale projects begun in New York in 1966. As its title indicates, it was a continuation of his "printed painting" project begun in Japan, perhaps motivated by nostalgia and solitude in a foreign country. Written in his native Japanese—the most effective tool for disclosing his thoughts and feelings at the time—the essay functioned as a home that could house his wandering mind far away from Japan. Similar to Theodor Adorno, who had to console his yearning for "home" in his writings in German during his exile in the U.S., and who eventually returned to Germany to overcome the "discontinuity" caused by exile and exposure to a foreign language (English),²⁶ Kawara poured out his random, stream-of-consciousness thoughts into three categories: O, criticism, and Δ. Perhaps intended to describe his ideas about three symbols, O, X, and Δ, the essay veils Kawara's scorning of art criticism by replacing symbol X with the word, "criticism." The essay, however, covers diverse subjects such as love, literature, art, artists, and science within the chaotic mixture of ideas and observations in his extremely liberal use of language, as

he once confessed that he wanted to make the writing similar to a “maze in a jungle without an exit” to the “repetitive rhythm of drums of the native Indians” that he had heard while he lived in Mexico.²⁷

Fragmented and illogical, the essay embodies Kawara’s multi-layered intentions and large scope of artistic and literary knowledge. He discusses visual artists such as Pablo Picasso, Michel Tapié, Georgeu Mathieu, Jean Tinguely, Jean Dubuffet, Vasily Kandinsky, Jan van Eyck, Auguste Rodin, Alexander Calder, Jackson Pollock, Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin; novelists and poets such as André Gide, Albert Camus, Johanne Wolfgang von Goethe, Anton Chekhov, Mishima Yukio, Guy de Maupassant, Roger Blin, Stendhal, Ivan Turgenev, William Faulkner, Francois Villon, Gustave Flaubert, Thomas Mann, Edgar Alan Poe, Franz Kafka, and Arthur Rimbaud; musicians such as Ludwig van Beethoven, Karlheinz Stockhausen, John Cage; and philosophers such as Kant, Nietzsche, Aristotle, Voltaire, Sartre, Mao Tse-tung. Upon a close reading, however, several coherent themes emerge from the dispersed sentences: art, art criticism, love, marriage and death.

The title, *Conjunctive Mood* (*setsuzoku hou*), connotes a relation between a man and a woman, in addition to the grammatical conjoining of two phrases. In fact, in the essay, Kawara contemplates various levels of the heterosexual relationship, from marriage to simple sexual intercourse, often focusing on Maka, a female artist whom Kawara met in Mexico. The essay, portions of which I provided here translated, begins with the straightforward question, “what is a marriage?”²⁸ Maka stimulates Kawara’s pondering on the female artist and her identity: “Maka imagines the future ideal plans in marriage with her womb”; “Then Maka says, ‘I am thinking about getting married.’” She is

enigmatic to Kawara: "Maka is too complex and coexistent"; "In Maka's world, an idea of nil, which is always both very Indian and Buddhist, is operating"; "Thus Maka 'dreams' about men on one hand, and because of it, there is a reason to paint her." She is described as a woman who dwells in the past and worries about remaining unmarried as a maturing woman: "Maka is not young"; "Because Maka was born in 1926"; "Maka circles around the past memories and pins them down one by one." Thus, she is said to be a quintessential woman in that her ideas fail to escape her biological conditions: "Probably if Maka's world looks like an oval, it must be because of the two contradicting focal points such as the original function of a womb and the recognition of men via an idea."

In the essay, Kawara maintains a biological or essentialist view of the relationship between the two sexes: "Decisive separation of a semen and an egg"; "An ovary is brutally precise to the sperms"; "There is no question that a navel has a very intimate relationship with a womb"; "Even if smooth curves remind men of women's breasts and hips, they complain, 'Women are such mysterious creatures!'" Here he translates the state of love into an oval, a symbol of unity and harmony: "Because love is also an oval shape and merely takes a circle shape as well." Kawara's biological understanding of human creativity eventually leads to a statement: "Women paint with a circular intuition."

Running alongside Kawara's pedantic array of knowledge and his obsession with the heterosexual relationship is his cynicism about criticism. He asks, "What is criticism?" Criticism, for him, is absurd and arbitrary: "However the existence of a critic was comical and did not fit in, as an artist says, like a crown"; "'a critic does not understand paintings' and 'a critic wouldn't understand paintings,' even though he has enormous

power and authority.” His distrust of art critics becomes audible: “That is to say, critics are the collection of countless points on the oval circumference, and each point maintains the same distance between the two focal points, such as an artist and an audience.”

Kawara is most cynical about the critics’ habit of oversimplified evaluation: “But a true critic isn’t a baseball referee: ‘strike,’ ‘ball,’ ‘safe,’ ‘out,’ and ‘time-out!’”; “And art critics are running around from one show to another, like mice, and on their notes are just O, X, and triangle marks.” He also questions the quality of past modes of criticisms: “Various traditional methods of criticism, such as ‘impressionist criticism,’ ‘moral criticism,’ or ‘conceptual criticism,’ have all become meaningless today.” Kawara’s alternative view of a critic is more like that of an artist: “A critic must be historical. But he should not talk logically”; “A critic can be an artist himself and also an audience. A great artist was also a great critic, and art can’t exist without the audience.” However, Kawara seems skeptical about art, as if to reveal his own struggle with the significance of art-making: “And according to Oscar Wilde’s *Moral Criticism*, ‘All art is immoral’”; “We might as well have to say, as Goethe said, ‘in fact, it is in vain to try to reveal the essence of an object. We only recognize its action.’”

The essay *Conjunctive Mood* is Kawara’s confession of his multifaceted thoughts and feelings facing the unforeseeable future in a foreign country. Its confessional tone anticipates his later pictorial diary of 1964, and his “I” journals from 1966. It not only reveals private moments (“Now I am thinking about the dried spot of semen on the bed sheet”) but also gives a glimpse into his life as a bachelor (“What is ‘singleness’ according to Poe?”). A memory of his childhood comes alive to him: “When I was a child, I used to be scolded by my mother, if I was taking the black dirt out of my navel,

and she used to tell me that I would get a stomachache if I did so.” He does not hesitate to formulate idiosyncratic theories such as, “Therefore according to my thought, Mayans consider 0 as 2” and “Honestly, I must say that the social value and commercial value of an artwork is like the issue of $0=2$ probability.” Veiled in the intentionally-complicated narration is his acceptance of the unpredictable final moment of life, death: “A dead person doesn’t laugh”; “But ‘death’ is a reality.” The essay ends, “No one talks about the words spoken by the dead,” as if Kawara was coming to value absolute silence as opposed to the meaningless words surrounding him. His solemn acknowledgment of human mortality later evolved into a view that death should not to be feared, nor entirely the end of being. He accepted death as inherently bound with the course of living. A remark he made in January 1996 reveals his restless thinking about the subject, and also sums up Kawara’s embrace of death as part of his thirty-year wandering: “Since we come into the world crying, we should go out of the world laughing.”²⁹ His conviction that the fear of death comes from ignorance of the next phase after death seems, as I will discuss in the next chapter, to be reflected in his perception of artworks as oscillating between continuity and discontinuity, closely connected to his temporal presence in this life.

ON-Language, 1964

Kawara created about twenty drawings and diagrams entitled *ON-Language* (Figs. 77-82) in his drawing book that he made in 1964 (Fig. 71). In this series, some of which are numbered, Kawara extended the method of drawing with words and symbols, as in some of his mindscapes, to a heavily subjective systemization of words. Experimenting formally with both syntactic and semantic aspects of language—both Japanese and

alphabet-based languages—and code, Kawara sought a lexicon for himself. If his prior work, *Conjunctive Mood* of 1962 had relied on a conventional mode of making sentences with proper nouns and verbs, *ON-Language* was a step forward toward language as a formal element, abandoning figurative images and reconstructing idea-word relations. Yet similar to the *Conjunctive Mood*, the new series employed a selection of words and phrases that seemed to have an inner coherence that the reader would not be able to easily grasp. Kawara's fascination with the illogical or irrational is evident here again. Even the title *ON-Language* is not straightforward, but seems to have a two-fold meaning. One is "On's language," referring to his own invention using his first name On; the other meaning is "regarding language," following the common practice found in titles such as "On Matisse."

Probably conceived of as a new visual paradigm, the multi-lingual series begins with topographical drawings similar to his "mindscapes" in the same drawing book. The first two drawings, *ON-Language* Nos. 1 and 2 (Figs. 77 and 78), maintain the square format that Kawara used in the mindscapes. Here Kawara inserted short or long Japanese sentences between or next to multiple lines or dots. Similar to the mindscapes in which he projected his imagination onto an imaginary land, *ON-Language* Nos. 1 and 2 are topographical compositions of words and sentences between lines and dots. They make evident how his preference for "maze-like" thinking could take a form of visual yet semantically-constructed diagrams. In No.1 (Fig. 77), he wrote in Japanese, in a monologue-like manner, about four art figures, perhaps the most significant four in his mind, such as Marcel Duchamp and Pablo Picasso. The phrases imply a skepticism about art critic Takiguchi Shuzo's practice of Surrealist drawings: "Mr. Takiguchi started to

draw but...”; opines about Duchamp in the phrase “Mr. Duchamp had better study language”; characterizes Jasper Johns as “Mr. Johns depends on a theme”; and labels Picasso as “Portrait artist Picasso.”³⁰ While dots and lines intermingle with these sentences and phrases, other descriptive phrases are added, reflecting his thoughts on art and art criticism: “the formless appears,” “criticism laughs,” “you can read only on the canvas without an order,” and “discontinuous linguistics.” Thus, this drawing visualizes the drifting of his mind, often hinging on free association. The phrase, “Express bound to Berlin,” for example, is connected to “Portrait artist Picasso.” Kawara seems to intentionally pair “criticism laughs” next to “Therefore it’s no good.” An arrow points from “look” to “words as a group.” In *ON-Language No. 2* (Fig. 78), Kawara completely abandons probable associations or coherent order. Words and phrases float all over the picture plane: “hello,” “therefore,” “very,” “suddenly,” “by the way,” “language theory,” “welcome,” “and,” “fresh,” “by the way,” etc. Except for “language theory,” most of the arranged words are commonplace words and expressions.

Later diagrams in this same series propose the different moods of the author’s mind in their arrangement of related words: playing simply with adverbs, exclamatory phrases, conjunctive words, or shortened abbreviations of words and numbers (as he does in diagram Nos. 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, and 11); fantasizing about multiple relationships on a bed (Nos. 4 and 14); observing things on the dinner table (No. 5), or about human relations and social positions (Nos. 7 and 8). In each diagram, Kawara establishes a somewhat arbitrary or subjective relation between words and sentences by connecting them with lines or simply arranging them like objects. While most of the diagrams are provocative yet indecipherable, *ON-Language No. 7* (Fig. 81) builds a diagram of occupations under

the title “Relations and Positions.” Words like “novelist” and “idiot white man” are loosely arranged, resembling a honey-comb web. In No. 8 (Fig. 82), Kawara creates a looser network of people entitled “Relations,” collecting words such as “postman,” “student,” “prostitute,” and “interpreter.” His arrangements within the rectangular format of paper progress from an experimental use of language as supplement, to a charting of his mental topography, to the making of more organized scientific charts. Thus the *ON-Language* series is the product of Kawara’s trials with semantic and syntactic aspects of languages, creating meaning-based relations between two or more linguistic units in the form of diagrams.

The making of a “home” in language is what the modern person would be tempted to do when far away from a native place. Kawara built his “home” in the *ON-Language* series in the Japanese language, and language that reminded him poignantly of his identity, as he had done in *Conjunctive Mood*.³¹ From *ON-Language* Nos. 1 through 8, and in No.14, Kawara dismantled and collected fragments of Japanese words like “and,” “hello,” and “this.” As with Adorno who catalogued English words (e.g. corny, jitterbugs, and sampling) during his exile in the U.S. out of an attempt to learn the new language, Kawara was also caught between a perceived moral duty to resist the foreign culture and the daily need to conform to it. Kawara eventually embraced foreign languages—specifically English and French—as a tool for his language-based series in diagram Nos. 9, 10, and 11.³² English words like “suddenly” and “interview” appear along with the free-floating lines seen in drawing No. 9, similar to the development of Japanese words in previous drawings. It is likely that Kawara felt he needed to accept the idea that “no self is an island” as he was in Paris, surrounded by a different linguistic culture.³³ Thus the

ON-Language diagrams demonstrate how he adopted other cultures and accepted hybridity as a possibility. It was not just foreign languages that he allowed in. He also adopted foreign names and foods for his lexicon. No. 4 (Fig. 79) forms a narrative in Japanese on the tension of sexual relationships, as the subtitle “Four People on the Bed” indicates. Bob, Dora, Maggie and Jim are four protagonists in the story, and become engaged in what Kawara jokingly calls “lesbian love,” or a “social, habitual” relationship.³⁴ In the middle of the drawing is a word, “child,” as if it represented the ultimate end of the sexual adventure and the beginning of life.³⁵ No. 5, *Dictionary of ON-Language* (Fig. 80), whose subtitle is “Objects on the Table,” is a simple collection of Japanese words related to food and a dinner table, such as “apple butter,” “*morisoba*,” “spoon,” “knife,” and “fish.”

Kawara employed diverse formats for language diagrams, never fully discarding the visual aspect: whether it be mental landscapes with dots, lines and formless patterns; drawings with word diagrams (Nos. 3, 7, and 8); or a plain horizontal notebook pattern (No. 10, and 11). Kawara hardly stopped pursuing the visual quality of representation, especially when he used language to create “distancing effects and qualities.”³⁶ From hand-written instructions (as in *Questions: Give Sentences with the following...*) to single words (*Egg*) (Fig. 72) to several word arrangements (*Nothing, Something, Everything*), Kawara tried to empty the words of emotion by rendering words such as “something” or “egg” as visual objects out of context.³⁷ Thus letters were not only “abstract signifier[s]” but also two-dimensional objects for Kawara.³⁸

This impulse to create his own language continued in later works, especially when Kawara employed Esperanto. Kawara’s replacement of Japanese with Esperanto marked

the beginning of his refusal to work in his native language or to be fixed as a Japanese artist, revealing his critique of an essentialized conception of the self. By using the language designed for all humans, Kawara proposed that all language is cultural production, not an innate possession, an idea also put forth by Derrida.³⁹ For Kawara, the Japanese language seemed to be a burden or imposition that directly controlled his previous identity. Thus it became necessary for him to take up multiple acquired languages in order to cross over national boundaries as a de-nationalized “citizen of the world.”

Composition of Words for a Catalogue, 1965

Kawara’s pursuit of diverse communicative modes led to his last “printed painting,” a manifesto-like writing piece, *Composition of Words for a Catalogue* (or *Arrangement of Meanings for a Catalogue*) (Fig. 88), exhibited only in the catalogue of “Japanese Artists Abroad—Europe and America” (the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, 1965). Kawara photographed the original piece of thirty-three Japanese sentences and reproduced it for the catalogue in a manner similar to his “printed painting” made in Japan. While he exhibited a triptych including three word paintings (“1965,” “One Thing,” “Vietnam”) *Title*, (Fig. 91) in the show—which have been exhibited as a triad after the show—and the *Code* (1965) (Fig. 92), he added this word-based work to the catalogue perhaps conscious of the Japanese audience, who might have remembered Kawara as the artist of “printed paintings” between 1957 and 1959.⁴⁰ Keenly aware of the context of the exhibition after several years of wandering, Kawara may have presented the work to contextualize and show his transition from “printed painting” to language.

This point is supported by the fact that Kawara even sent the essay, *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting* (1962), to Homma Masayoshi, the curator of the show, who later published it in the *Bijutsu Techo* (December 1965) along with his own essay about Kawara's transformations after 1959 including his visit to Kawara's studio in June 1965.⁴¹

Kawara's message in the manifesto followed the tone he had used in the 1950s.⁴² He explored the legitimacy of "printed painting," a form that could overcome both the threat of the newly-emergent mass media (e.g. television) and the incomprehensibility of contemporary art. He argued that "printed painting" could break down the distance between visual arts and literature. Critiquing the view that it would be impossible "to read a painting," he called for the need to "establish a new methodology through change of values."⁴³ Since the role of art in society was being threatened by the fast advance of television, "art in the middle art zone" should embrace the "issues of documentation and expression, inside and outside, consciousness and unconsciousness, codes and communication, human beings and matter, and poem and image" in order to establish a new methodology.⁴⁴ Despite the critical message, the statement ended with a rather vague, yet typically Kawara-like unintelligible sentence such as he had used in the *Conjunctive Mood*: the reason that one prefers objective facts in "logics and mathematical puzzles" is that such things as, "I am you, you are him and he is me, are clear and true."⁴⁵

Kawara's effort of 1965 to introduce his last two works made in Japanese in Japan does not seem coincidental. In the same year, Kawara donated his two signature series from the 1950s, *The Bathroom* and *Events in the Warehouse*, along with the color-coded *Code* (1965), to the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, the host of the show

“Japanese Artists Abroad—Europe and America.”⁴⁶ As if he wanted to close a phase in his career, he let his major works made in Japan remain housed in the museum where he had exhibited in the 1950s. That year Kawara also agreed to sit to be photographed for Honma’s above-mentioned article—a photograph which became the last public portrait of Kawara (Fig. 67). After 1965, all portraits of Kawara remain private, replaced by his “I” series and date paintings as it were. Thus 1965 was a significant year in the evolution of Kawara’s art.⁴⁷ The “Japanese Artists Abroad” exhibition (both the actual show and the catalogue) of 1965 was an opportunity for Kawara to show and reconsider his past and present search for “a new methodology.” Exhibited along with this last “printed painting” was a triptych entitled *Title* (1965) (Fig. 91), which consists of three paintings that literally depict the words “ONE THING,” “1965,” and “VIET-NAM.” Among them, *1965* shows all the characteristics of later works such as the date paintings of 1966, unlike the essay-like, lengthy composition for the catalogue: the monochrome background, the depiction of numerical objects, and the covered presence of the author. By 1966, Kawara hid himself behind the date painting series and “I” journals.

Code, 1965 and Beyond

Making a code or alternative communicative mode was one of Kawara’s focuses of 1965, although it had interested him consistently since his strategic destruction of logical communication in the questionnaire for *The Wrath of the Colony* in 1959.⁴⁸ Kawara once defined his art as a search for “code”: during a conversation with Minemura, Kawara defended himself against Lippard’s “perspective of emptiness” about his work, asserting “But it is wrong. I started from code.”⁴⁹ As I discussed, Kawara’s investigations of codes

as non-conventional modes of communication continued in the *Conjunctive Mood* essay from 1962. Between 1964 and 1965, Kawara's interest in substitutable signs and codes was increasing. His 1964 diary-like drawing book demonstrated his extensive experiments with diverse kinds of codes and symbols, from abbreviations of words to card patterns.

In 1965, he made a series of works written with seven colored strokes based on an essay about politics in the satirical *MAD* magazine.⁵⁰ The work, *Code* (Fig. 92), was his translation of that essay into a series of slashes made by rainbow color crayon pencils, erasing English letters and leaving color-coded strokes along with regular quotation and question marks. Kawara spoofed the self-seriousness of artists who emphasized an artisanal hand by reducing his forms into a series of repetitive strokes.⁵¹

In the same year, he made several paintings entitled *Code* (Fig. 93), which have since been destroyed (remaining only in documentary photos). They consisted of a series of paintings of multiple, colored squares on white backgrounds in a grid-pattern. Resembling the minimalist use of the square format (though minimalism had not yet coalesced as a movement in 1965), the destroyed canvas works are evidence that Kawara has maintained a leaning toward a minimalist modality. This speculation is supported by the fact that Kawara arranged his word and date paintings in horizontal or vertical rows in his studio after 1966 (Fig. 64), and still does so (Fig. 9)—in a style loosely reminiscent of, say, Donald Judd's sculpture installations.

On August 31, 1969, Kawara wrote the first paragraph of another code work, both in the supplementary journal to his date paintings and in his *I Read* journal:

Eight quintillion eight hundred two quadrillion fifty-seven trillion two hundred one billion eight hundred fifty million five hundred four thousand—one hundred and

eight ten quintillionths two hundred five trillion six billion seven hundred twelve million nine hundred ninety-five thousand one hundred eighty.

This continuous spelling-out of an astronomical number was later titled *Code* (1969) and published in the catalogue of the exhibition *On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity 1963-1979* (1980).⁵² Switching from the previous visual, color-based codes to a verbal one, the new code transforms a mathematical number into a written linguistic English phrase that takes up seven pages (as in the finalized form in the 1980 catalogue). Despite the plain, clear order inherent in the linguistic representation, Kawara's mathematical code frustrates anyone who dares to imagine the exact scope of the given number.

The 1969 *Code* seems to have paved the way for *One Million Years—Past* (1969-70) (Fig. 6) and *One Million Years—Future* (1980-89), both of which contain a series of typed years. Each work comprises ten-volumes, and accounts for humankind's projected one million years on earth. The *One Million Years—Past* covers the time from 998031 BC to 1969, and the future version, from 1981 AD to 1001980 AD, in numeric codes that form a grid pattern.⁵³ What appears to be a simple arrangement of numbers is, in fact, Kawara's imagining of the time period in which human civilization forms and perishes. The final year, 1969, of *One Million Years—Past*, and the starting year, 1981, of *One Million Years—Future*, evidence Kawara's presence and authorship. For the twelve-year discontinuity between the two works is not a mere gap, but proof of Kawara's awareness of the "vanity of civilization's self-preservation ethic."⁵⁴ In the work, he articulated his own existence and subjectivity as the creator of the two histories, codifying the time around his life. Celebrating his ancestors and descendants, he also dedicated the past history to "all those who have lived and died," and the future history, to "the last one."⁵⁵

Recently, Kawara has turned his interest in code toward Braille (Fig. 94). Though largely unavailable, he did publish *Six Sens, Code in Braille* (1995) in *Codes* in 1996 with the French writer and mathematician Jacques Roubaud.⁵⁶ For this artist's book, Kawara presented an embossed Braille text, an translation of a poem by his collaborator Roubaud, along with his 1965 slash mark codes and 1969 number code.

Language as Medium

In the 1960s, it was not just Kawara who embraced language as a medium. Many artists found in language the possibility of creating the ultimate artistic abstraction, or the end of abstraction that would be useful in overcoming a Greenbergian, formalist, self-referential concept of art.⁵⁷ Challenging Greenberg's focus on medium and on formal investigations that turned away from content, artists began to explore alternative modes such as serializing, emphasizing idea over product, and critiquing conventional art spaces.⁵⁸ They accepted the idea that art is "essentially linguistic" and attempted to reduce the gap between the viewer and the work.⁵⁹ The linguistic medium fit their anti-material or de-materializing strategies, which reflected an antipathy toward market-oriented art such as traditional tableaux or objects.

The introduction of the linguistic into the visual field occurred gradually, although it is often considered a reaction to the prevailing modernist ideology supported by Clement Greenberg. Long before World War II, artists who had integrated language into their work included the Cubists Picasso and Braque, Dadaist Hanna Hoch, and Constructivist El Lissizky.⁶⁰ Well after the Second World War, Jasper Johns used standard stencil letters with a gestural veneer on canvas before Kawara began painting words and dates. If the

earlier avant-garde artists were interested in playing with numbers and letters through gestural brushwork or collage, newly emerged artists in the 1960s generally emphasized the informational aspect of language, minimizing visual pleasure. In the U.S., artists such as Ed Ruscha, John Baldessari, Joseph Kosuth, and Christine Kozlov explored the role of language in art. British artists, specifically ones involved with the group Art & Language, were also engaged in implementing linguistic signifiers in the realm of the visual. Different from the previous generation, these artists preferred to use typed text, documentary photographs, or mechanically produced images and text.

The newly-emerging artists strategically removed images in favor of ideas and information conveyed in words and phrases, thus attacking the “primacy of the visual.”⁶¹ This language-based art, with its “iconophobia,” as John Roberts calls it, entails an attitude that favors the power of language over the efficacy of the visual in conveying message or content, which has been an ever-lasting issue in western epistemology.⁶² Ambivalence about image—i.e., doubting whether images are deceitful or faithful to truth also underlies the work of some Conceptualists, who used the analytical methods of linguistic philosophers such as A.J. Ayer and Rudolf Wittgenstein, in order to critique the visual.⁶³ For analytic Conceptualists such as Kosuth and the Art & Language group, art does not have to be a traditional aesthetic experience of the visual. Such artists diminished the significance of aesthetic pleasure and preferred two-dimensional formats in their investigations of cerebral questions, such as “What is art?” This separation of the sensual (image) from the logical (knowledge) prompted certain artists to focus on the communicative and informational functions of art in the period before photography-based Conceptual art (exemplified in the works of Victor Burgin and Hans Haacke) appeared,

mostly after the dominant period of analytic Conceptual art.⁶⁴ Overcoming the limitations of word-only works, the introduction of photographic images allowed later Conceptual artists to reexamine the pictorial and to turn to the social. For them, a camera was a means of capturing or documenting events or scenes both in an “opinion-less” and in an opinionated way.⁶⁵

It is no coincidence that many Conceptual artists took up critical writing as a part of their projects in the belief that contemporary formalist criticism was not serving artists nor making their art understood. The attitude that art practice is not separate from essay-writing reflects a drastic change from Abstract Expressionism, which favored passionate gestures and the movement of brushstrokes. Assuming the role of critics, artists such as Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, Ad Reinhardt, Dan Graham, Sol LeWitt and Daniel Buren wrote statement-like essays about their own work or other’s work in the form of magazine articles or essays. Other forms included self-promotional advertisements and announcements, postcards, or faux interviews. Kosuth, in particular, wrote prolifically and in depth about his ideas on a scale comparable to any art critic’s work. The British Art & Language group published its own journal, *Art-Language*, to print their texts and essays, which they considered a major part of their artistic production. In contrast to the importance of critical writing to other Conceptualists and to his prolific writing activities in Japan in the 1950s, Kawara seemed to feel that pursuing that method would not suffice. Instead, he continued to inscribe simple numbers and sentences rather than writing a lengthy essay.

“Language” Series: A Reception of Language-based Art

In the spring of 1967, John Weber and Virginia Dwan, owner of the Dwan Gallery of New York, conceived of an exhibition that would fill up a summer season usually reserved for minor artists or group shows. The gallery was then representing Minimalist artists such as LeWitt.⁶⁶ The summer show, entitled “Language to Be Looked At and/or Things to Be Read,” focused on the new trend of language-based art, and it has since become known as one of the pioneering Conceptual art shows. Dwan and Weber’s timely show brought to the public many artists who were integrating words into their art in a somewhat different manner from previous generations. The exhibition was not intended to initiate a series, but with the success of the first show, Dwan Gallery continued the format for three more years before the gallery closed permanently in 1971. The shows—later known as the “Language” shows—as Dwan recalls, evolved as young artists who dealt with words increasingly appeared in the gallery with their portfolios after the success of the initial show. As the show began to include the younger artists, the role of the series emerged as that of effacing the boundaries between poetry and visual production, a reflection of boundary-breaking trends in the 1960s.⁶⁷

The first exhibition (June 3-June 28, 1967) presented a variety of historical artists, such as Marcel Duchamp and René Magritte, along with young artists like Kawara and Arakawa. Also mixed into the group show were Pop artists (Robert Indiana, Roy Lichtenstein) and emerging artists (Robert Smithson and Walter de Maria) who would later become known in part for *Land* or *Earth Works*.⁶⁸ More like a small-scale survey of word-based art as opposed to idea-based art, the first show did not display any distinct inclination toward Conceptual art as we now understand it, since it did not include artists such as Kosuth or Lawrence Weiner. The subsequent exhibitions, “Language II” (May 25

- June 22, 1968), “Language III” (May 24 - June 18, 1969), and “Language IV” (June 2-25, 1970), grouped artists who actively investigated language as a critical means of art making.⁶⁹ Among them were artists active in New York, such as Graham, Morris, Dennis Oppenheim, Weiner, Kosuth, Ray Johnson, and LeWitt, as well as artists from European countries such as Hanne Darboven, Jan Dibbets, Iain Baxter, and Terry Atkins, most of whom were attracted to New York, as Kawara had been by the city’s support of new avant-gardes. While the first “Language” exhibition attempted to create a proper lineage of linking the established artists with the younger ones such as Arakawa, Kawara, and Graham, the second and later exhibitions focused on introducing emerging artists such as Adrian Piper, Darboven, Kosuth and several members of Art & Language.

Kawara participated in the first three Dwan “Language” exhibitions, but they did not bring him much critical attention. Nonetheless, they constitute a significant part of Kawara’s early exhibition history.⁷⁰ The first *Language* show was, in fact, Kawara’s first public exposure in New York, preceding other group shows such as “Opening Exhibition of Normal Art” at the (Lannis) Museum of Nominal Art run by Kosuth (November 1967), “557,087” (September-October 1969), “Konzeption-Conception” (October-November 1969), and “Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects” (April-August 1970).⁷¹ LeWitt, who maintained a close relation to the Dwan gallery, had suggested Kawara for the first “Language” show.⁷² In contrast to Kawara’s failure to attract critics, Kosuth gained recognition as an “advocate of Conceptual art” at a crucial time for his burgeoning career not long after graduating from the School of Visual Art in 1967. Kosuth’s work, *Real: Art as Idea as Idea*, a photostat-based work that shows a blown-up image of the

dictionary definition of the word, “real,” against a dark background, was exhibited in the second show of 1968 and brought him favorable critical responses.⁷³

The reviews of this series of exhibitions reveal a glimpse into how word-based Conceptual art was received by critics in its early stages. While the term, “Conceptual art,” began to circulate with LeWitt, who published “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” around the time the first “Language” show was mounted in the summer of 1967, critic John Perreault, in his review, did not use the term but instead found that the presented works experimented with words in order to discover “a legitimate plastic device.”⁷⁴ Discerning two ways of using language, the “paradoxical-poetic” use and the “concretist” one, Perreault tried to define the new inclination, yet remained on the surface of the issue.⁷⁵ The paradoxical-poetic use of language was, according to Perreault, art that “call[s] into question the relationships of words to images and/or the relationships of words and images to ‘reality’,” following the tradition of the Dada and Surrealist artists.⁷⁶ An example was Jasper Johns, who exhibited a sculpture of a metal toothbrush entitled *The Critic’s Smile*, a work similar to René Magritte’s *Key of Dreams*. The “concretist” use of language, similar to Concrete poetry, followed Cubist formalism in emphasizing the use of the words as “design elements.”⁷⁷ The press release for “Language III” (1969) picked up Perreault’s phrase, calling the participating works “concrete poetry.”⁷⁸ This uncertainty about how to name the new trend was reflected in the name “poets,” which was commonly conferred on those artists when they dealt with words.⁷⁹

On the occasion of the second Dwan Language show, critics attended to the works that blended words into images. Robert White and Gary M. Dault categorized eight kinds of “Word Art,” which in varying degrees used words as part of a work of art.⁸⁰ John

Chandler dismissed most of the works as “graphic art,” while also discussing how the literary and the visual had been historically correlated, for example, in Persian and Chinese arts.⁸¹ By 1969, Peter Schjeldahl had called attention to the artistic aspect of the presented works by labeling the third show “a comprehensive survey of recent Word Art.”⁸² He recognized the “hybrid activities” burgeoning under the influence of contemporary U.S. poetry.⁸³ This diverse use of labels shows how often early Conceptual art was confused with Concrete poetry. The case of the critic Perreault is a good example. Perreault pondered the question, “Is or isn’t Conceptual art poetry?” until 1971.⁸⁴ By 1971, after the historical exhibitions “January Show” (1969), “Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects” (1970), and “Information” (1970), Perreault finally accepted Conceptual art as legitimate, arguing that “if an artist places anything, even his dirty underwear, in an art context, then it’s art, good, bad, or indifferent art, but still art,” echoing Kosuth.⁸⁵

Kawara and Kosuth

Kawara typed a simple phrase, “Conceptual Art,” as the subtitle of a painting of October 9, 1969. That same month, Joseph Kosuth published the first part of his now-famous article, “Art After Philosophy” in the *Studio International*. Here he discussed the need for “Conceptual art” in an age of “separation between aesthetics and art.”⁸⁶ In the article, Kosuth explored a Conceptualism based on the logical positivism in A.J. Ayer’s *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936), and placed art above philosophy, thus setting the goal of the new artist as that of questioning both the function and the use of the language of art. In the second part of his essay, published in the November issue of the same journal, Kosuth credited Kawara as a pioneer of “*purely* conceptual art” along with Terry

Atkinson and Michael Baldwin in Britain, whose analytical approaches he found similar to his own.⁸⁷ Being “*purely* conceptual,” the author argued, would mean inquiring into “the foundations of the concept ‘art’.”⁸⁸ The third part of the essay, published in December 1969, was mainly a summary of his works after 1965.

Kosuth’s “Art After Philosophy” essay came out at a time when he was actively advocating his idea of “conceptual art” either by participating or collaborating with organizers in pioneering exhibitions such as “January 5-31, 1969” and “When Attitudes Become Form,” and his solo-show at the Leo Castelli Gallery.⁸⁹ Kosuth was even noticed by *Newsweek* as a promising artist.⁹⁰ Since his graduation from the School of Visual Arts in 1967, Kosuth had ambitiously played multiple roles as an artist, curator, teacher and critic, calling his work simply “an art game.”⁹¹ He had opened the Lannis Gallery in early 1967, with the first show, “Nonanthropomorphic Art by Four Young Artists: Joseph Kosuth, Christine Kozlov, Michael Rinaldi, Ernest Rossi.”⁹² Shortly after the gallery opened, its name was changed to the Museum of Normal Art. One of the shows, “15 People Present Their Favorite Book” (1968), was one of the first shows that featured books as art.⁹³ From 1968, he started to teach at the School of Visual Arts, where he had been a student between 1965 and 1967. Calling himself “the first artist to be out of the grip of the 19th century,” he ardently preached his concept of art beyond object.⁹⁴ By December 1968, he participated in Seth Siegelaub’s exhibition, “The Xerox Box,” a conceptual exhibition which existed only in the form of catalogue in which artists presented their works.⁹⁵ It was Kosuth’s first association with Siegelaub, who had already organized shows like “Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner” (Spring 1968), and “Douglas Huebler: November, 1968” (1968).⁹⁶

The liaison between Kosuth and SiegelauB continued with the exhibitions, “January 5-31, 1969” (a.k.a. “January Show”), “March 1-31, 1969,” “Joseph Kosuth, Robert Morris” (March 1969), and “July-August-September, 1969.”⁹⁷ Kosuth’s self-promoting skills and political astuteness led him to invent a critic, Arthur R. Rose, whose name Kosuth used as a pseudonym in an interview of the four “January Show” artists for *Arts Magazine* (February 1969) immediately after the show.⁹⁸ The interview appears to be led by the fake critic, but the truth is that each artist wrote the text of his own interview by himself. In the six column interview, Kosuth’s answer took up more than a third of the space, and anticipated his next essay, “Art After Philosophy,” when he insisted that being an artist means to “question the nature of art” or that art exists “as a kind of philosophy” shifting from “the perceptual” to “the conceptual.”⁹⁹ The interview game, which Douglas Huebler, Barry, and Weiner participated in, reflects the four artists’ playing with breaking down the boundary of an artist by acting along with the fake critic. It also reveals Kosuth’s aspiration for success, probably inspired by the early success of Frank Stella who starred in the New York gallery scene in the early 1960s while still in his early twenties. In fact, Stella was “one of the most important...and extremely radical” figures for the young Kosuth.¹⁰⁰

The essay “Art After Philosophy,” as the title implies, intended to herald “the end of philosophy and the beginning of art,” and to contextualize Kosuth’s own position in a lineage with Ad Reinhardt, Robert Morris, and Donald Judd.¹⁰¹ While he devalued Barry, Huebler, and Weiner, his “January Show” colleagues, for being not entirely conceptual, Kosuth stressed Kawara’s “private” projects from 1964 to 1969, such as his codes and single word paintings, and his *One Hundred Year Calendar* and *I Got Up* series.¹⁰²

Kosuth's outspokenness regarding his "January Show" colleagues contrasts with his bonding with the British group Art & Language and with Kawara. He found the works of the former similar to his and Kawara's work, "a highly conceptualized kind of art," despite his "private" venture and use of painting.¹⁰³ Kosuth's alliance with Art & Language seems to have turned many of his "American friends" away from him.¹⁰⁴

The schism between Kosuth and the other three artists in the "January Show" became aggravated as the year went on. In a symposium on November 2, 1969, moderated by Siegelau, Kosuth challenged the three artists, arguing that art is not "about man any more than it is about the fact that it is made by man."¹⁰⁵ Critiquing their adherence to traditional concepts of space for physical objects, Kosuth declared, "I don't find those [issues regarding space]...relevant to the work I'm doing."¹⁰⁶ The confrontation heightened when Kosuth, who kept insisting on the conceptual aspect of language, was confronted by Weiner who commented, "You like the word conceptual. For you, it's fine. It fits you. I don't really see it fitting me. I don't think there is a preconceived concept because the material is so erratic."¹⁰⁷

The back-and-forth relationship between Kawara and Kosuth in October 1969 was not coincidental. In fact, Kawara's association with Kosuth began in October 1967, slightly before Kosuth's opening of the Lannis Gallery in November 1967. Kawara recorded their first encounter in his journal: "Dan Graham brought Joseph Kosuth to my apartment this afternoon" (October 12, 1967). Impressed with Kawara's date paintings, Kosuth included Kawara in the first show of his Museum, "Opening Exhibition of Normal Art," which presented a mixture of minimal artists and young Conceptual artists including Kosuth himself and his girl friend Kozlov.¹⁰⁸ As a response, diarist Kawara recorded the opening

day (November 12, 1967) in his date painting journal: “The Metropolitan Museum of Art had 100,000 visitors and The Lannis Museum of Normal Art entertained young artists this afternoon in New York.” Their liaison soon developed beyond the professional level. Kawara and his wife Hiroko had frequent casual meetings with Kosuth and Kozlov between 1967 and 1970; the frequency of their meetings is recorded in Kawara’s *I Met* journals during the time. Kawara’s subtitle journal also gives the details of their gatherings, such as seeing a movie together or playing a game on an idle afternoon: “Joseph, Christine, Hiroko and I tonight saw ‘Bonnie and Clyde’ at the Charles Theatre on Ave. B near 12th Street in New York City” (November 18, 1967); or “I played ‘Monopoly’ with Joseph, Christine and Hiroko this afternoon. We ate a lot of spaghetti” (January 1, 1968).

This friendship between Kawara and Kosuth might explain why Kosuth included Kawara as a kindred figure in the 1969 article, despite the obvious fact that Kawara never abandoned painting—the medium Kosuth critiqued—and that his works maintained a “poetic” quality that Kosuth abhorred. Furthermore, their contact is worth mentioning to explain why Kawara would not settle down in the New York art world, as well as to establish the early history of Conceptual art, especially in the formative period of language-based Conceptualism or “linguistic Conceptualism” in New York between 1967 and 1970.¹⁰⁹ The two artists not only maintained a friendship and accessibility to each other’s studios, but they also participated together in group shows, such as the “Language” series and the “Information” show (1970).¹¹⁰ Thus it is safe to assume that Kosuth’s frequent visits to Kawara’s studio after October 1967 affected his theory and practice of art as idea.

The fact of this contact is especially important after the heated argument between Benjamin Buchloh and Kosuth regarding Kosuth's "Protoinvestigations" such as *Art as Idea (Chair)*. The debate centered on whether or not Kosuth produced the early works including the canonical *Art as Idea (Chair)*—now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York—in 1965 (while he was a student at the School of Visual Arts working with his instructor Mel Bochner) as he has claimed since the late 1960s, specifically in the show "Information" (1970).¹¹¹ Based on his interviews with artists like Barry, Bochner, Graham, LeWitt and Weiner, who had visited Kosuth's studio at the time and did not recall seeing the works, Buchloh questioned the credibility of the claimed date of Kosuth's works, which do not have any documented proof of date.¹¹² Such absence of proof, he argued, contrasts with Kawara's well-documented word paintings from 1965.¹¹³

In fact, critics had questioned Kosuth's intention and credibility immediately after the publication of "Art After Philosophy" in late 1969. French critic and curator Michel Claura critiqued Kosuth's unclear age ("born between 1938 and 1948") as well as his biased philosophical ideas that excluded Existentialism and Phenomenology.¹¹⁴ Above all, he questioned Kosuth's intention to "attack" Barry, Huebler, and Weiner, and suspected Kosuth's "conceptual art" was in truth "Art Kosuth."¹¹⁵ Claura eventually canceled Kosuth's participation in his show, "18 Paris IV. 70" (April 1970), which the French curator organized with the help of Siegelau.¹¹⁶ Kosuth's former teacher, critic Dore Ashton seemed to feel compelled to point out that in 1965, Kosuth was a student who was "trying to make paintings that were distantly related to the de Stijl philosophy," while Kosuth's teacher Bochner was making "conceptual" works that used xerox

machines before Kosuth's "conceptual" projects.¹¹⁷ In turn, Kosuth wrote two short articles responding to these criticisms.¹¹⁸ Calling the criticisms "personal" and "dishonest," Kosuth argued that his three-part essay was an attempt to "differentiate" his work from his three colleagues, not to attack them, and that Ashton—a person with "terror of and hostility toward any young artist"—had not known about his works as much as Bochner had during his SVA years.¹¹⁹ He accused Bochner of using Ashton "for a little history-attacking in his favor," and for having taken advantage of students' labor and contributions for the show "Working Drawings and other Visible Things on Paper not necessarily Meant to be Viewed as Art" (1966) during his SVA years.¹²⁰ Kosuth insisted that the idea of using a Xerox machine had then been "in the air" and that his work preceded Bochner's.¹²¹ However, he also admitted that his life after "Art After Philosophy" was not "particularly comfortable" for him, which was only the beginning of the criticisms he would face.¹²² Despite Kosuth's reply to Buchloh in 1989, that most of his works before 1967—the year Kosuth's career began to be seen in public—were produced "in notes," he had to defend himself against what he called "an organized form of abuse by writers associated with *October*" throughout the 1990s.¹²³

Kosuth's exposure to Kawara's date paintings and word paintings might have played a significant role in shaping his idea of "Conceptual art" in 1969, which had evolved drastically from his 1966 view of "non-organic, non-polar, completely synthetic, completely unnatural" art objects as "conceptual."¹²⁴ Kosuth's mechanically reproduced photostats can be seen, as Alberro suggests, as an "antithetical completion of On Kawara's 'date paintings,'" which he began slightly earlier than Kosuth's projects.¹²⁵ Formally, both have a similar color scheme (white lettering on a black or dark

background), and both incorporate writing into painting.¹²⁶ Another example is Kosuth's systematization of his own works into several series—similar to Kawara's practice—which evolved one after another, from *Art as Idea as Idea* to *Investigations*.

The two artists took drastically different paths after 1969.¹²⁷ Despite the criticisms he faced, Kosuth gradually gained recognition as a pivotal member of the newly-emerging movement. Embracing Reinhardt's "total signifying activity," which includes activities like interviews, lectures, discussions, and writings, Kosuth envisioned a multi-dimensional role for a Conceptual artist.¹²⁸ He also attempted to have a community-oriented art practice by building a bridge with Art & Language, and he attracted some New York artists to affiliate under the group's name. He believed in a "community of communication" that consists of artists who could function as analysts of language, philosophers and anthropologists.¹²⁹ In the community, the individual artist would assume the notion of authorship not in terms of making physical and visible works, but rather by creating invisible, mental processes that might not necessarily result in a visible work of art.¹³⁰ Despite Kosuth's embrace of Kawara as one of the original conceptualists, despite noticeable differences, Kawara's solitary and personal projects were not fully received or categorized as linguistic Conceptualism then nor afterwards. While Kosuth's good communication and administrative skill brought him the title, "the Savonarola" of Conceptual art, Kawara preferred silence and invisibility, and retreated from the fame-seeking art world.¹³¹ Kawara's doubts about becoming a 'star' artist in New York—as epitomized by Kosuth's self-promotion and success—drove him in an opposite direction: he

quietly disappeared from New York, de-centralizing his location in pursuit of a nomadic, solo approach.

Kosuth and Art & Language

Kosuth's attraction to Art & Language at the cost of his tie with "American friends" led to the creation of a trans-Atlantic community of "linguistic Conceptualists" or "analytical Conceptualists" based on the commonality of the English language.¹³² The connection, begun when Kosuth acknowledged the original members (Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin) as early, "purely conceptual" artists in his 1969 essay, was followed by a formal alliance with the British artists' group, when Kosuth became an "American editor" of the group's journal *Art-Language* in 1970.¹³³ Published with the same name as the group, the journal *Art-Language* included essay-like works by members of the group and others. Kosuth's article, "Introductory Note by the American Editor," which appeared in the second issue (February 1970) of the journal, signified not only his commitment to an international community activity, but also a new phase of linguistic Conceptual art based on English.¹³⁴ Kosuth and Art & Language shared the view that art should go beyond images, repudiating morphology and preferring textual and contextual works that analyze the nature of art objects. With some degree of difference in their analyses, Kosuth and the Art & Language group investigated the linguistic elements and structures frequently used in interpreting art, thus partaking in the Anglo-Saxon trend of applying analytic philosophy to art.

This bonding across the Atlantic between Kosuth and Art & Language made the group look like a sort of art movement in itself at that time, and it attracted young American

artists up until the New York branch was disbanded in 1976.¹³⁵ Finding a bond in terms of artistic goals and practices, Art & Language was successful in providing an environment for a community of artists to overcome cultural, geographical and political barriers. Above all, Kosuth—paradoxically, given his own self-promotion—found the characteristics of the group ideally suited to his dream of a community: the group suppressed the individuality of each artist, and each assumed anonymity under the name of the group in a community-oriented production system. But the British artists' intentional avoidance of building up the myth of a single “great” or “original” artist was a reaction against so-called Greenbergian Modernism, especially Jackson Pollock's legacy, which they found intensified the celebration of individual originality as if it were the ultimate embodiment of modern America.

Like Kosuth, the British members of Art & Language played multiple roles in the system: as art critics (their consistent criticism of Modernist art itself was a theme in their works, and one of the members, Charles Harrison, was himself an art critic and editor active in the magazine *Studio International*); publishers (in May 1969, the group started to publish a journal, *Art-Language*, and many of their works from the 1960s have the format of a publication, either as a book or a brochure); and curators (the members created the concepts of their shows, and Harrison co-curated the traveling show from Berne, “When Attitudes Become Form” at its Institute of Contemporary Art venue in London in 1969, as well as “The British Avant-Garde” at the New York Cultural Center in 1971). The group often transformed itself by creating organizations like “Art & Language Institute,” which authored the work for the 1972 Documenta in Kassel, and “Art & Language Foundation Inc.” established by American Art & Language members.

Yet a split was inevitable between the British and New York artists.¹³⁶ Art & Language in New York started to launch independently a project, *The Annotations* (1973) and published its own magazine, *The Fox*, under the guidance of Kosuth between 1975 and 1976. The new magazine, which adopted a different format from *Art-Language*, brought more success among American audiences, for it used less didactic and more appealing language. The founding of a new magazine with its different orientation, signaled the New York artists' assertion of leadership independent of the British founders. However, by the end of 1976, New York Art & Language lost its initial zeal and disbanded, leaving Kosuth disillusioned about the idea of making a community after his six years of membership in Art & Language.¹³⁷ He argued later that "careerism" and "ideological insecurity" within the group, along with Ian Burn's "bureaucratic style" led them to split. Kosuth's observation of "ideological insecurity" among Art & Language members indicates that there had been a gap between the U.S. and British counterparts—a gap caused by the differences in their expectations and artistic backgrounds. The major factor in the split, however, seems to have originated from the issue of hegemony despite their common ideal that an equal, democratic collaboration would be possible on the basis of mutual respect. Kosuth once pointed to fundamentally different views about "collaboration" in Art & Language, a concept that in practice often meant nothing but "working for" Michael Baldwin in England and Mel Ramsden in New York.¹³⁸ Whether it was the loss of his original motivation or dissatisfaction with the dominance assumed by the British members, Kosuth left the group in order to make his own projects in 1976.

Painting as Medium: Differences between Kawara and Other Conceptual Artists

Kawara's persistence in using painting technique for his date paintings has often drawn attention because of his unwillingness to let go of the craft aspect of painting, which contrasted with his colleagues—Kosuth, Art & Language, Weiner and others—all of whom abandoned painting, critiquing its crafted, self-referential aspect. In fact, Kawara's search for diverse communicative codes developed in close relation with the medium of painting. In his early code works of 1965—from his use of brushstrokes to his square modular patterns on canvas—Kawara relied on paint and brush, specifically on liquitex or acrylic on canvas. It would seem that Kawara was haunted by the idea of painting as his ultimate task to resolve, at least conceptually, an idea that had persisted since his conception of “printed painting” in Japan. When interviewed by Lippard in 1977, for example, he confessed that his art is “oriented *toward* painting from language,” despite its categorization as conceptual.¹³⁹ This love of painting indicates that he might have been transfixed by the modernist myth of abstraction (in a broad sense) as potential universal language.

Such a contrast often puzzled critics who were tempted to categorize him as anti-Greenbergian, and anti-formalist. In 1986, Dan Cameron praised Kawara's “abstraction of language as a form of painterly craft,” while in 1992 Joshua Decker paid attention to Kawara's determination to employ the “language of painting as a central component of his ensemble of structures” in contrast to other Conceptual artists, who turned away from formal pictorial qualities toward mechanically-produced images.¹⁴⁰ Decker focused on suppressed gestural actions in Kawara's painting, a quality common to Kosuth or Art & Language. He argued that Kawara's date paintings go beyond the conventional pictorial

systems of both abstraction and representation, creating meaning from both verbal and numerical language.¹⁴¹

Kawara's rejection of illusionist imagery in favor of letters and numbers in his date paintings can be seen as "self-sufficient and self-reflexive," as Ann Rorimer argues, and, in that respect, as similar to works by such contemporaries as Frank Stella, Robert Ryman, and Piero Manzoni, all of whom pursued monochromatic paintings a few years before Kawara launched his date painting series.¹⁴² Kawara's paintings showcase a matt surface and monotonous color, often white upon a background of dark colors such as dark grey, dark green, red, or blue. However, while preserving a hand-painted quality, his monochrome-background paintings are no more "brushy" than the other three artists' monochromes. Moving away from painterly, gestural abstract works, Kawara shared with certain monochrome painters an attitude that denies emotional expression. Yet, he hardly disavowed content in his painting, a viewpoint that he had maintained since his interest in narrative in Japan in the 1950s.¹⁴³ He painted the date in an imitation of a typeface drawn in pencil. The letter shapes often vary from one period to another, without any coherent system.¹⁴⁴ Thus the painted dates are both to be read and to be looked at.

Kawara's paintings of dates seem to be a result of his long pondering of what painting should be. Being aware of contemporary theories of painting, especially aiming at one that supports the reductive nature of painting, he once said in a Duchampian tone that "art that expresses one's inner side has been ended," as if declaring a moratorium on his own painting history which had evolved from heavily figurative works to "printed painting."¹⁴⁵ It was 1965, the year he made his last work in Japanese, that he made such a remark intending to redirect his own course to painting. He cast doubts on abstraction or

simple “flatness in a painting,” and explored a way to move beyond color planes by integrating words and numbers in a picture.

One answer to the question why Kawara insisted on the hands-on quality of painting might be found in Yamada’s argument that Kawara often searched for the proper form for the content he was dealing with.¹⁴⁶ Kawara had used pencil and paper for the emotionally disturbed figures in his works of the 1950s. Preferring small-scale, intimate drawing series that he could work on on a daily basis, he created a narrative of tormented war survivors. For Kawara, who often accepts the transience of life as a theme, the act of painting a date was a natural progression since the slow and steady process involved in handling liquitex and a rectangular canvas—from the long process from the pencil sketch to the final application of paint—reflects the flow of time. For Kawara, the act of painting became a ritual that he had to repeat in order to record his temporal presence in a place. Writing the date of the day was as important as the act of painting for Kawara, who took painting as a daily ceremony with a “stoic stance.”¹⁴⁷ The fact that he discards the canvas if it is not finished before midnight indicates how finishing up is essential to his daily ritual of painting. Thus, his paintings, as Minami argued, are made in order to paint, combining actions of “passing time and painting a painting.”¹⁴⁸ The result is a record of a man who wishes to become one with time, a theme that I will explain further in Chapter Five.¹⁴⁹

Kawara’s inscription of his presence thus contrasts with the analytical Conceptual artists such as Kosuth and Art & Language, for whom art should not be “about man any more.”¹⁵⁰ While all of them used language as a medium, they did so with drastically different attitudes. For Kosuth, language is a crucial method to investigate the conditions

of art as he delineated them in “Art After Philosophy.” Questioning the conventions of traditional painting and sculpture, he defined art as an analogy between the status of the work of art and that of an analytical proposition. By making mechanically blown-up images of dictionary definitions of words, such as “water” and “meaning”—albeit with some alterations—Kosuth’s *Art as Idea as Idea* series reflects his affinity with Duchamp. Out of an anti-modernist reaction to the tradition of painting, this series also embodies the influence of Reinhardt’s spirit of nullifying painting by systematically recasting the predecessor’s “black squares.”¹⁵¹

Early works by the founding members (Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin) of Art & Language also used writing in their critique of painting. Their canvas-based works—such as *38 Paintings (Painting No.11)* (1966) (Fig. 95), one of the *38 Paintings* series—emphasize two-dimensionality by using photostat as a means, a year before Kosuth’s photostat series. Using canvases of variable dimensions, they pasted on canvas texts quoted from their own notes or from others’ books. The texts on the photostat can be seen as the equivalent of a painted surface on canvas. The difference is that the arranged text reduces the materiality of the surface rather than bringing attention to it. In *Guaranteed Painting* (1967), they divided the space of the photostat into two, contrasting black and white. They then inserted this text on the surface of the white space: “This painting contains a square measuring six and three quarter inches. It is positioned five and one half inches from each edge.” While the work maintains a minimalist format, the edge between the two colors almost looks mechanically rendered. This text is not only a parody of the warranty which is commonly provided with consumer goods, but also a critique of painting itself, whose identity depends on the artist's claim. Another work, *100% Abstract*

(1968) shows numeric symbols on monochrome canvas: 72.5%, 27.5%. Painted with acrylic paint, the numbers indicate the chemical composition of the paint that was used for the work. At a glance, it resonates with Kawara's *Location* (1965), which inscribed the scientific, numeric symbol of a geographic site in the Sahara desert. But contrary to Kawara, who wished to create an abstract landscape of a distant place, Art & Language emphasized the materiality of painting beyond self-referentiality, employing non-representational, abstract language.¹⁵²

Art & Language deliberately used academic, elitist language in their writing projects as did Kosuth, unlike the more accessible, word-based Conceptual art by Kawara. The Art & Language members saw text as a set of symbols incapable of ascribing such things as expressive power to paintings. They believed that a text could “colonize a space (a physical and cultural space) previously occupied by non-textual material.”¹⁵³ Their transition from the critique of paintings to text thus resulted from a desire to transform the surface of painting. Their text needed to possess a degree of intentionality in order to abolish “the aesthetic possibilities of the surface.”¹⁵⁴ Their journal, *Art-Language*, was at the center of their writing projects. The members also contributed to other journals and publications, but they always republished the articles in *Art-Language*. What is noteworthy is that individual members used their own names—not the generic name of the group—when publishing as evident in their first issue of *Art-Language* in May 1969. As one of their early steps toward Conceptual art as textual practice, the introductory essay in the issue emphasized writing activity, drawing the line between the theoretical aspects of Conceptual art and art criticism, even though they admitted that “[i]nside the

framework of ‘conceptual art’ the making of art and the making of a certain kind of art theory are often the same procedure.”¹⁵⁵

Kawara’s voice in his textual work resembles that of Weiner, who takes verbal language to the level of the “meta- or proto-poetic.”¹⁵⁶ Beginning with *Statements* (1968) (Fig. 96), Weiner explored textual works in various forms, such as artist’s books, posters, and outdoor installations.¹⁵⁷ His language-based works express the artist’s intention, yet have “lyricism” in their simplistic, carefully condensed inscriptions.¹⁵⁸ While the subject of his sentences is often art-related—as he once said, “the subject matter of my art is—art”—the author’s voice is always distinct in his work.¹⁵⁹ The rhythmic flow of the words in each work suggests that Weiner approaches language not just as a form of communication but also as a carrier of voice that can reach the audience in an intrusive or sometimes commanding way. To create this in daily life, Weiner often relied and relies on the visual characteristics of the text, such as color, size, and shape as well as the specificity of public sites or events.

Kawara’s “private” ventures of language and painting ultimately took a different course from those of his colleagues. While he began the venture as a search for effective ways of “mutual delivery” or communication, he gradually turned toward simple, highly individual and subjective, systematic autobiographical mechanisms, oscillating between the two adjacent territories of the visual and the literary, and of reading and looking. Despite his claim in the mid 1960s that “art that expresses one’s inner side has been ended,” he did not completely abandon the expressive project, but rather slowly retreated from public sight. As he revolved his work around himself and made painting a daily ritual, his work became increasingly solipsistic and self-referential.

NOTES

¹ Emile Benveniste, "Subjectivity in Language," in *Philosophy of Language: the Big Questions*, ed. Andrea Nye (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 46. Benveniste's essay is part of his book, *Problems in General Linguistics* (1971).

² For discussions about language as interactive with race and gender, see Alice F. Freed, "Epilogue: Reflections on Language and Gender Research," and Deborah Cameron, "Gender and Language Ideologies," *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, eds. by Janet Holmes and Miriam M. Meyerhoff (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2003).

³ Lynne Cook, *On Kawara: One Thousand Days One Million Years*, (New York: Dia Center of Art, 1993), n.p.

⁴ David Higginbotham, "Of windows and vases," *On Kawara: le consortium*, (Dijon, 1985), n.p.

⁵ Joshua Decter, "(Re)Reading On Kawara: The Difference of Repetition," *Flash Art* 163 (March/April 1992): 86.

⁶ In this poster-like work, he inserted a text (spelling as in the original): "La Peinture et L'humain par On Kawara...Le Peintre persiste que la peinture nouvelle doit utiliser les Moyens techniques d'imprimerie comme c'un des elements picturaux. Aussi, le peintre souhaite qu'on prenne cette planche pour l'oeuvre originale, non pour la reproduction. Cette planche a été achevé d'imprimer à Tokio en Janvier 1958 sur les Presses offset du Fujii Printing Co. LTD., sous la direction du peintre. Le Cliché a ete réalisé dans L'atelier du Toyo Process Co. LTD., Sous la direction du peintre. Prix 500 Fr. 300 Yen."

⁷ Kawara might have chosen alphabet letters simply because the Japanese language typewriter was not available at the time. His attraction to the typewriter keyboard resurfaces in a drawing of 1964, which shows a grid pattern of a keyboard. Probably motivated by the absence of a Japanese typewriter, he arranged Japanese alphabets on a standard keyboard pattern as if he wanted to invent his own version. See also Chapter Two, endnote 181 for Yoko Ono's failed search for a Japanese typewriter.

⁸ Roland Waspe, "On the Way: 1964 Paris-New York," *On Kawara: 1964 Paris-New York Drawings*, (Kunstverein St. Gallen: Kunstmuseum, 1997), 15.

⁹ My conversation with Kawara on July 5, 2002.

¹⁰ Kawara used Esperanto during his stay in Tokyo in January 1971 and January 1979. See Minemura Toshiaki, "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1," *Mizue* (March 1981): 56.

¹¹ Kawara, “Conception and Proposal of Printed Paintings,” *Bijutsu Techo*, special issue (Spring 1959): 83.

¹² *Ibid.*, 83.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁵ Kawara, “The Meaning and the Directions of the Questionnaire,” *Bitsutsu Techo*, special issue (Spring 1959): 93-94; translated by Hiroshige Ari at the request of the author.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.* My note in bracket.

²⁰ *Bijutsu Techo* 158 (June 1959): u.p. section of the magazine. My note in brackets.

²¹ Yamada Satoshi, “On Kawara’s series of pencil paintings – the content and form,” *On Kawara 1954, 1954, 1956, Naito Rei 1996* (Nagoya City Art Museum, 1996), 25. During a research trip in Japan in 2002, I discovered that most of the “printed paintings” are in private collections. The private collector I managed to meet was a close friend of Kawara’s in the 1950s.

²² Minemura Toshiaki, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2,” *Mizue* (April 1981): 114.

²³ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ The essay was first published as On Kawara, “Conjunctive Mood—A Project for Printed Painting [Setsuzoku hou—insatsu kaiga no tameno kikaku],” *Bijutsu Techo* (December 1965): 37-39. Translated by Ari Hiroshige at the request of the author. All the following quotes are from the above essay.

²⁶ Theodore Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: NLB, 1978), 87

²⁷ Honma Masayoshi, "On Kawara Afterwards—Visiting On Kawara in His Studio in New York," *Bijutsu Techo* (December 1965): 41. Translated by Hiroshige Ari at the request of the author.

²⁸ Kawara, "Conjunctive Mood," 37-39. All the following quotes are from this source.

²⁹ Linda Weintraub, "On Kawara: Self-documentation," *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s-1990* (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, 1996), 57.

³⁰ The Japanese sentences were translated by Kumagai Naoko at the author's request.

³¹ See Sinkwan Cheng, "Fremdwörter as 'The Jews of Language' and Adorno's Politics of Exile," *Adorno: Culture and Feminism*, ed. Maggie O'Neill (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 75-103. Cheng traces Adorno's use of language as site of identity by pointing to his use of foreign words out of morality, which eventually led him to return to German.

³² See Theodore Adorno, "On the Use of Foreign Words," *Notes to Literature*, Vol. 2, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 286-91; Adorno, "Words from Abroad," *Notes to Literature*, Vol. 1, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 185-99; and Adorno, "On the Question: What is German?" trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique* 36, 121-131.

³³ I borrowed the phrase from Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Feoff Bennington and Brian Masumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 15. Here he describes how as characteristic of a postmodern society, the self (or individual) "exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always located at 'nodal points.'"

³⁴ Quoted from Kawara's *On-Language No. 4*.

³⁵ He used the word, "child," as the focus of other drawings. The two images of a child, crying and laughing, are also in the same drawing book.

³⁶ Decter, 86.

³⁷ Anne Rorimer, "The Date Paintings of On Kawara," *Museum Studies* 17/2 (1991), 131-32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other or the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford University Press, 1996), 23; originally pointed out by Kathryn Chiong in her article, "Kawara On Kawara," *October* 90 (Fall 1999), 69.

⁴⁰ See Honma, 40. The three works were displayed as a group again in "Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975" held at the Los Angeles County Museum in 1995.

⁴¹ See endnote no. 27.

⁴² Minemura, "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1," 55.

⁴³ Kawara, "Arrangement of Meaning for a Catalogue (katarogu no tameno imi no hairetsu)," *Japanese Artists Abroad—Europe and America*, n.p.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ The catalogue of the museum shows that Kawara donated in 1965 the whole 28 drawings of *The Bathroom* series (1953-54); 31 drawings of the *Events in the Warehouse* series (1954), *Dump* (1954), and *Smallpox* (1953). Kawara later, in 1969, donated two subtitle journals—one from 1966 and the other from 1967—to the museum.

⁴⁷ Minemura, "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1," 55.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁹ According to Minemura's 1979 "Tokyo Memo," Kawara told him that "during 1964 and 1965 during his stay in NY, he had contact with Dan Graham, Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth, and he was concentrating with the issue of the code." The date seems erroneous because it was in the fall of 1967 that Kawara first met Kosuth through Sol LeWitt, who he had encountered in spring of that year. Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ursula Meyer, "Introduction," *Conceptual Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972), xii. Meyer had a conversation with Kawara on October 7, 1970, during which Kawara said "This code is easily cracked. You will find many answers which yield one question. I got this question from *MAD Magazine* (Number 128, July, 1969)." But the date of the source is contradictory to the date of his work, 1965.

⁵¹ He once said, "Recreating is more important than creation." Ursula Meyer, "Introduction," *Conceptual Art*, xii.

⁵² See *On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity 1963-1979* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1980), 37-43.

⁵³ Kawara's most recent edition of *One Million Years-Future* (1998) was shown in Kassel Documenta 11 in 2003. The work consisted of twenty leather-bound books containing typed years from 1999 Ad to 1,001,998 Ad.

⁵⁴ Dan Cameron, "The On Kawara Story," *Arts Magazine* 61 (October 1986): 39.

⁵⁵ He wrote on the first page of each work, "For all those who have lived and died" and "For the last one" respectively.

⁵⁶ Kawara, and Jacques Roubaud, *Codes* (Paris: Yvon Lambert Gallery, 1996).

⁵⁷ Higginbotham, n.p.

⁵⁸ Lippard, "Notes on the Independence Movement," *1967: At the Crossroads*, exhibition catalogue (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1987), 25.

⁵⁹ Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art* (London: Phaidon, 1998), 163. He lists six characteristics of word-based art: 1) it is part of "the ongoing project to dematerialize the art object"; 2) it attempts to "communicate to a wider audience"; 3) it aims at "bridg[ing] the gap between the viewer and the piece" as if the author is speaking to the viewer intimately; 4) it is based on the belief that all of art works are "essentially linguistic"; 5) it reflects the need to "theorize about the meaning of art"; and 6) it partakes of the disgust toward the art market.

⁶⁰ Decter, 86.

⁶¹ John Roberts, "Photography, Iconophobia and the Ruins of Conceptual Art," *The Impossible Document: Photography and Conceptual Art in Britain 1966-1976* (London: Camerawords, 1997), 9.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 18

⁶³ It should be noted that a difference lies between word-based conceptual art and analytical conceptualism. While the former favors language as carrier of the message, the latter (exemplified by Kosuth and the group Art & Language) relies on linguistic philosophical approaches which analyze the preconceptions and conditions of widely-used terms in the art world such as "art," and "exhibition." See Godfrey, 163 and John Roberts, 9.

⁶⁴ Roberts, 9.

⁶⁵ Donald Karshan, "The Seventies: Post-Object Art," *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects* (New York: The New York Cultural Center, 1970); later published in *Studio International* 180/925 (Sept. 1970): 69-70; reprint in *On Kawara: Whole and*

Parts 1964-1995 ((Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1996), 70. The exhibition was held from April 10 to August 25, 1970.

⁶⁶ Virginia Dwan, Interview by Charles F. Stuckey, March 21, 1984, Archives of American Art; taped and transcribed, 20-27. Dwan founded a gallery in 1959 in Los Angeles, near UCLA. Her first shows included Jasper Johns, Ad Reinhardt, Jean Tinguely, Edward Kienholz, Robert Rauschenberg, and Yves Klein. She also met through Klein other French artists, such as Arman and Niki de Saint Phalle. Later, she opened a gallery in New York and had Edward Kienholz for her first show. Through Tom Doyle and Sol LeWitt, she was introduced to other emerging artists such as Carl Andre, Robert Smithson.

⁶⁷ See Dwan Interview, May 10, 1984, tape 6, script, 30. This boundary-breaking or border-erasing is more evident in the trend that artists themselves expanded their roles to curators, writers, and publishers as part of their artistic practices.

⁶⁸ Among the other artists were Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Dan Graham, Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns, On Kawara, Edward Kienholz, Sol LeWitt, Roy Lichtenstein, René Magritte, Filippo Marinetti, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Francis Picabia, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Smithson, and Kenneth Snelson.

⁶⁹ The 1968 show included William Copley, Carl Frederick Rentsward, Hanne Darboven, Robert Indiana, Arakawa, Robert Morris, Dan Graham, Dan Flavin, Dennis Oppenheim, Kawara, Lawrence Weiner, Carl Andre, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Rauschenberg, Michael Heizer, Robert Smithson, Ray Johnson, Sol LeWitt, Marcel Duchamp, Edward Kienholz, Walter de Maria, Allan Kaprow, Hannah Weiner, William Anastasi, Bernar Venet, James Byars, Peter Hutchinson, and R. Denis Dunn. In the last show were Carl Andre, Walter De Maria, Robert Rauschenberg, Schuldt, John Baldessari, Fred Sandback, Adrian Piper, Robert Smithson, Sol LeWitt, Terry Atkinson, Michael Baldwin, Iain Baxter, Hanne Darboven, Jan Dibbets, On Kawara, Cristine Kozlov, and Rosemarie Castoro. By the fourth show in 1970, artists like Kosuth and Art & Language became the main focus as other Conceptual art exhibitions—such as “Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspect” (1970) and “Information” (1970)—were developed to gather the new international artists.

⁷⁰ Robert Smithson is another artist who was in all the exhibitions.

⁷¹ “557,087” was organized by Lippard for the Seattle World’s Fair and held at the Seattle Art Museum between September 5 and October 5, 1969. Among the participants were Andre, Baldessari, Barry, Bochner, Buren, Darboven, Kawara, Kosuth, Graham, Haacke, and LeWitt. The number of the title was derived from the population of Seattle. “Konzeption-Conception” was held at Städtisches Museum Leverkusen between October and November of 1969, organized by Rolf Wederer and Konrad Fischer. Participants include Baldessari, Barry, Baxter, Bochner, Boetti, Broodthaers, Brouwn, Buren, Burgin, Darboven, Dibbets, Graham, Huebler, Kawara, Kosuth, LeWitt, Ruscha, and Weiner.

“Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects,” at the New York Cultural Center from April 10 to August 25, 1970, curated by Donald Karshan.

In 1973, looking back at the show “557,087,” Lippard wrote that it was not intended to be a “concept art” show as Peter Plagens had called it in a review—he had called the show the “first sizable (i.e. public institution) exhibition of ‘concept art.’” (*Artforum* [November 1969]). Between the fall of 1968 and spring of 1969 when she conceived the show, “concept art,” according to her, had not yet “crystallized.” See Lippard, *Six Years: the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, 1997), 111.

⁷² Their connection continued when Lippard organized a “chain exhibition” as one of six critics for a special edition of *Studio International* (July/August 1970), edited by Seth Siegelau. For the eight page assignment, Lippard chose Barry, Kantelbach, Weiner, Kawara, LeWitt, Huebler, NETCo., and Barthelme and asked them to pass a “situation within which to work” to the next artist. Weiner sent to Kawara an “instruction” that says “Dear On Kawara, I must apologize but the only situation I can bring myself to impose upon you would be my hopes for your having a good day. Fond Regards, Lawrence Weiner.” Then Kawara send a telegram, “I am still alive. On Kawara” to LeWitt, who later created “74 permutations on the telegram from Kawara. One of them was, “Am I Still On Kawara?” See Lippard, *Six Years*, 179-80.

⁷³ John Chandler, “The Last Word in Graphic Art,” *Studio International* 12/9 (November 1968), 26. See also *Time* (June 14, 1968) and John Perreault, “Word Works,” *The Village Voice*, 13 June 1968.

⁷⁴ John Perreault, “Legibility,” *The Village Voice*, 15 June 1967. See also Sol LeWitt’s essay, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” *Artforum* 5/10 (Summer 1967): 79-83. It is notable that Sol LeWitt published this essay at the time when the first *Language* show (in which he participated) was held.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Perreault, after two reviews of the former shows, also participated in the show as an artist, which indicates how open the scope of the exhibition was.

⁷⁹ I thank Hiroko Kawahara for pointing this out in a conversation with me in March, 2002. Kosuth also mentioned the advance of “Concrete poets” as symptomatic of the shift from traditional poetry to a new model that uses “common” language. See Kosuth, “Art After Philosophy,” *Studio International* 178/915-917, 1969, reprint in *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 24.

⁸⁰ The eight categories include “1, words as part of the scenic prospect; 2, words as labels and captions; 3, words as concrete embodiments of speech; 4, words as independent integers of modern art; 5, words and illustrations; 6, words and decoration; 7, words as shape, and 8, concrete poetry.” Robert White and Gary M. Dault, “Word Art & Art Word,” *Artscanada* (June 1968); quoted in John Chandler, “The Last Word in Graphic Art,” *Studio International* 12/9 (November 1968): 25.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Peter Schjeldahl, “New York Letter,” *Art International* 13/8 (October 1969): 75.

⁸³ Ibid., 76.

⁸⁴ Perreault, “It’s Only Words,” *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), 136, reprinted from *The Village Voice*, 20 May, 1971.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Kosuth, “Art After Philosophy,” 16.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁹ In 1969, Kosuth participated in sixteen group shows and thirteen solo shows or individual projects all over the world including Nova Scotia College of Art (October 25-November 9, 1969) and Coventry College of Art, England (November 10-25, 1969). His show at the Leo Castelli was held from November 22 to December 20, 1969.

⁹⁰ For further information on Kosuth’s self-promoting activities in New York, see Alexander Alberro, “Deprivileging Art: Seth Siegelaub and the Politics of Conceptual Art,” Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1996, 118-121. See also Howard Junker, “Idea as Art,” *Newsweek* (August 11, 1969).

⁹¹ Kosuth refers to the practice of art as a “game,” and calls his artist-run Museum of Normal Art “an art game.” See Alexander Alberro, “Introduction: At the Threshold of Art as Information,” *Recording Conceptual Art: Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelaub, Smithson, Weiner by Patricia Norvell*, eds. by A. Alberro and P. Norvell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2.

⁹² Kosuth wrote that the gallery was named after his cousin Lannis Spencer who paid the first month’s rent for the space located at 315 East 12th St., New York. The

participants in the first show were mostly his friends who helped the gallery open on February 19, 1967. See Lippard, *Six Years*, 24.

Kosuth and Kozlov had written together an essay, “Ad Reinhardt: Evolution into Darkness—The Art of an Informal Formalist; Negativity, Purity, and the Clearness of Ambiguity,” in May 1966 while both were students at the School of Visual Arts, New York. See Lippard, *Six Years*, 14.

⁹³ Among the invitees were Morris, Reinhardt, LeWitt, Rinaldi, Mangold, Baer, Graham, Smithson, Andre, Kozlov, Bochner, Ryman, Tanju, Rossi and Kosuth himself. See Germano Celant, “Book as Artwork,” *Book as Artwork 1960/1972*, exhibition catalogue (London: Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd., 1972), 15. Interestingly, Kosuth listed this show as his “one-man” show in the catalogue of “Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects” (1970).

⁹⁴ For Kosuth’s characterizing of himself as post-19th century, see his interviews for *Prospect 69* (Städtische Kunsthalle Dusseldorf, September 1969); reprint in *Joseph Kosuth: Interviews 1969-1989* (Stuttgart: Edition Patricia Schwarz, 1989), 17.

⁹⁵ The exact title of the catalogue is “Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Lawrence Weiner,” organized by Siegelaub and John Wendler. Each artist was given twenty five pages to work with.

⁹⁶ The show “Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner” was held at Windham College, Putney, VT from April 30 to May 31, 1968. “Douglas Huebler: November, 1968” was a catalogue exhibition that showed Huebler’s projects on paper.

Seth Siegelaub, an art dealer and entrepreneur, organized *January Show* in the same month of 1969 in a rented office space in midtown Manhattan in New York. While the *Language* series introduced many emerging Conceptual artists, Siegelaub’s *January show* (January 1969) featured a more focused group of artists who worked with linguistic mediums: Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, and Lawrence Weiner

Siegelaub had been involved in the art world since 1964 when at the age of twenty three, he opened a gallery, Seth Siegelaub Contemporary Art. After the gallery was closed due to financial problems in 1966, he began to operate a business in his suite on Madison Ave. During this time he associated with artists like Weiner, Barry, and Huebler and subsequently curated alone or co-curated shows such as “Bradford Junior College Exhibition” (February 4-March 2, 1968), and “Windham College Exhibition” (April 30-May 31, 1968) before he organized the “January Show” in 1969.

⁹⁷ The exhibition “January 5-31, 1969” was held at 44 East 52nd St. (McLendon Building), and showed four artists—Barry, Huebler, Kosuth and Weiner. “March 1-31, 1969” was a catalogue exhibition (distributed free). Siegelaub organized “Joseph Kosuth, Robert Morris” (March 1969) along with Huebler, who taught at Bradford Junior College, Massachusetts, the site of the exhibition. “July-August-September, 1969” was another catalogue-only exhibition. Eleven artists participated from all corners of the world: Andre (The Hague), Barry (Baltimore), Buren (Paris), Dibbets (Amsterdam), Huebler (Los

Angeles), Kosuth (Portales, N.M.), LeWitt (Düsseldorf), Long (Bristol, England), N.E. Thing Co. (Vancouver), Smithson (Yucatan), and Weiner (Niagara Falls).

⁹⁸ For the invention of the critic Arthur R. Rose, see Gabriele Guercio, “Formed in Resistance: Barry, Huebler, Kosuth and Weiner vs. The American Press,” *L’Art conceptuel, une perspective*, 1989, 81; and Alexander Alberro, “Introduction: At the Threshold of Art as Information,” 7. Alberro argued that each artist wrote his own interview entirely by himself. The interview by Arthur R. Rose was published as “Four Interviews,” *Arts Magazine* (February 1969): 22-3.

⁹⁹ Rose, 23.

¹⁰⁰ See “Art as Idea as Idea: conversation with Joseph Kosuth” (with Stig Brogger and Erik Thygesen), an interview for Danish Radio in 1970; reprint in *Joseph Kosuth: Interviews 1969-1989*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Gabriele Guercio, “Introduction,” *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), xxiv.

¹⁰² Kosuth, “Art After Philosophy,” 27-28. The work of the former three artists—Huebler’s “non-morphological” art (based on maps and photographs), Barry’s use of non-traditional material, and Weiner’s idea of art before fabrication—were, ironically, not conceptual enough for Kosuth.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰⁴ See “Joseph Kosuth: Art as Idea as Idea” (with Jeanne Siegel), an interview broadcast on WBAI-FM in April 1970; republished in *Joseph Kosuth: Interviews 1969-1989*, 49-50. Kosuth said, “Many of my American friends also don’t understand my support of Art & Language in England. They are important to me because I can talk to them about art from a perspective, theoretically, that my American friends can’t or won’t,” 50.

¹⁰⁵ See “Art Without Space,” in Lippard, *Six Years*, 130. The symposium, “Art Without Space” was aired on November 2, 1969 on WBAI-FM, New York. The participants were the four “January Show” artists. The excerpts first appeared in Lippard, *Six Years*, 127-133.

¹⁰⁶ “Art Without Space,” 128.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁰⁸ Among the invited were Andre, Bochner, Darboven, Walter de Maria, Christine Kozlov, LeWitt, Robert Ryman, and Kosuth. See Guercio, “Introduction,” xxii.

¹⁰⁹ The term “linguistic conceptualism” was coined and favored by Alexander Alberro. See Alberro, “Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966-1977,” *Conceptual Art: Critical Anthology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), xviii.

¹¹⁰ The “Information” show was held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York from July 2 to September 20, 1970.

¹¹¹ Benjamin Buchloh questioned the date in his well-known article, “From the Aesthetic of Administration to Institutional Critique: Some Aspects of Conceptual Art 1962-1969,” and Kosuth defended himself in “Joseph Kosuth Responds to Benjamin Buchloh,” saying his works “existed only in notes or drawings” until they became materialized later when he gained “financial resources” in 1967. See the two articles in *L’Art conceptuel, une perspective*, 1989. The two essays were later republished in *October* magazine. See Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 122, n. 18; and Kosuth, “Reply to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art,” *October* 57 (Summer 1991): 153-61. Kosuth wrote, “I find it bitterly ironic that he singles out my work to have legitimate dates questioned while the dates of two of his friends’ works are patent fabrications that are left unchallenged,” 153-154.

¹¹² See Buchloh’s article, footnote no.18.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Michel Claura, “Conceptual Misconceptions,” *Studio International* (January 1970): 5.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 5-6. Concluding the letter, he wrote, “For the benefit of those who have not already understood as much, Kosuth is the leader of Conceptual Art. Moreover, from henceforth, when we wish to say Conceptual Art, we must say ‘Art Kosuth’.”

¹¹⁶ The show was held at 66 rue Mouffetard, Paris. Among the artists were Wilson, Weiner, Toroni, Ryman, Ruscha, Long, LeWitt, Lamelas, Kawara, Huebler, Guinochet, Gilbert & George, Dijan, Dibbets, Buren, Brouwn, Broothaers, and Barry.

¹¹⁷ Dore Ashton, “Kosuth: the facts,” *Studio International* (February 1970): 44.

¹¹⁸ Kosuth, “Kosuth replies to Claura,” *Studio International* (February 1970): 44; and Kosuth, “An Answer to criticisms,” *Studio International* (June 1970): 245.

¹¹⁹ Kosuth, “An Answer to Criticisms,” 245.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ “Joseph Kosuth Responds to Benjamin Buchloh,” (1989) led to another article by Kosuth, “Intention(s),” *Art Bulletin* 78 (Summer 1996): 407-12. Here, Kosuth describes the present as “a dangerous moment for artists” in which “art historians speak with an authority” connected to academia, 411. Referring figures such as Rosalind Krauss, he deplored what he called “an organized form of abuse” of his activities “by writers associated with *October*.” (footnote no.9). An interview he gave in 1997 brought up the issue again: “Recently there has been a need among certain writers associated with *October* to re-write the actual history of ‘who did and said what, and when’ to both demonstrate their own invention and creativity...” See Eleanor Heartney, “Joseph Kosuth: the Production of Consciousness,” *Art Press* 223 (April 1997): 34.

¹²⁴ Kosuth’s statement, dated June 1966, argued that his use of “non-organic, non-polar, completely synthetic, completely unnatural” art objects was “conceptual.” In a statement of February 1967 for the “Nonanthropomorphic Art by Four Young Artists,” he accounted for his “models” as a “visual approximation” of “ideas” in his mind. See his statements published in Lippard, *Six Years*, 24-5.

Kosuth mentioned his *Leaning Glass* (1965) in “Art after Philosophy” in 1969, an installation of four panes of glass leaning against a wall. The installation photograph published in the *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990* (1991), however, shows a slightly different presentation: four glass panels lean on the wall, but with words printed on the surface—CLEAR, SQUARE, GLASS, LEANING. His original essay of 1969 did not discuss the existence of words. See *Art After Philosophy and After* (1991), 30, and 197-99.

¹²⁵ Alberro, “Deprivileging Art: Seth Siegelaub and the Politics of Conceptual Art,” 124.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Kawara has also told me that the number of their encounters decreased as Kawara was on the road, and Kosuth became separated from Kozlov.

¹²⁸ See “Joseph Kosuth: Art as Idea as Idea” (with Jeanne Siegel), an interview broadcasted in WBAI-FM in April 1970; republished in *Joseph Kosuth: Interviews 1969-1989*, 47.

¹²⁹ Guercio, “Introduction,” xxvii.

¹³⁰ Ibid., xxix.

¹³¹ Mary Anne Staniszewski, “Conceptual Art,” *Flash Art* 143 (November/December 1988): 90.

¹³² The former term is favored by Alberro while the latter is favored by Roberts. See Roberts, 9.

¹³³ The expansion from Britain to New York was reflective of the postwar trend of New York as a magnet for international artists.

Art & Language is a group of conceptual artists that emerged in Coventry, England around 1965 after absorbing knowledge about post-war American art (mostly Abstract Expressionism). Still active and visible in the contemporary art world, the group maintained its base in Britain in spite of numerous changes in its membership, its geography and its production. Their collaborative activities and geographical oscillation across the Atlantic put the group in a formative position in the history of contemporary Conceptual art.

¹³⁴ Kosuth's essay was the only article contributed by an American artist in the issue. By September 1973 (Vol.2, no.2/3), Kosuth's name appeared merely as one of the editors of the magazine. The other members of the editorial board at that time were Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin, Ian Burn, Charles Harrison (General Editor), Graham Howard, Harold Hurrell, Kosuth, Philip Pilkington, Mel Ramsden, David Rushton. After that, Kosuth's name did not appear and only the announcement of an address for inquiry in the U.S., which started to show up on the back cover in November 1971 (Vol.1, no.4), continued to appear until May 1975 (Vol.3, no.2).

¹³⁵ See Terry Smith, "Art and Art and Language," *Artforum* 12 (February 1974): 49-52. According to Smith, the group's idea of demolishing the differences in ideas and opinions was not easy and turned out to be rather a romantic one. As the members in Britain started to have conflicts of opinions and ideas, Terry Atkinson, one of the founding members, left the group. But the group survived as new members joined and enlarged the size of the group: Philip Pilkington and David Rushton, editors of *Analytical Art* became members of Art & Language in 1970.

¹³⁶ Part of this project, involving the circulation and annotation of texts, was published as a book entitled *Blurting in Art & Language*. This book contains 408 entries of words and their subjective definitions made by the members. Some of the entries include "Art-Criticism," "Artist," "Art, Work of," "Certainty" etc.

¹³⁷ Harrison says the split was due to the difficult economic situation for Conceptual art after 1972, but it seems that there was no motivation among the New Yorkers to maintain the status quo. Harrison, *Essays on Art & Language* (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 99-100.

¹³⁸ "(Notes) On 'Anthropologized' Art," in *Art After Philosophy and After*, 100. Kosuth wrote, "With the growth of Art & Language to include two groups (England and New York) and perhaps as many as twenty members (membership being dependent on who's filling out the list), collaboration has come to mean (in England) working for Michael Baldwin or (in New York) working for Mel Ramsden."

Harrison pointed out the differences between the two Art & Languages. While the British one tended to give priority to “the organizing potential of formal and logical systems,” the American counterpart paid much attention to “the composition of a working community” and “the nature of its concerns,” Harrison, 99. Issues about what to do and who would do it were incidental problems for the British while these matters were important to the American. The geographical difference, the rural and industrial places vs. the metropolitan, international city, was also mentioned as a reason for the split. See Harrison, 100.

¹³⁹ Lippard, “Just in Time: On Kawara,” *On Kawara 1967* (Los Angeles: Otis Art Institute Gallery, 1977), n.p.

¹⁴⁰ Cameron, 39; and Decter, 87.

¹⁴¹ See Decter, 87.

¹⁴² Rorimer, 126; she discusses the historical significance of Kawara’s work in relation to Frank Stella’s monochromatic paintings, Robert Ryman’s white paintings, and Piero Manzoni’s *Achrome* series. She finds a similarity between Kawara’s numerical numbers in date paintings and Stella’s loosely painted numbers, arguing that Kawara’s date paintings elaborated upon the ideas of painting of the 1950s and 1960s.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁴⁵ Honma, 36.

¹⁴⁶ Yamada, 25.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Minami Yusuke, “Travel and Time,” *On Kawara—Whole and Parts 1964 – 1995* (Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 1998), 40.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ “Art Without Space,” *Six Years*, 130.

¹⁵¹ Alberro, “Deprivileging Art: Seth Siegelaub and the Politics of Conceptual Art,” 124.

¹⁵² Their discovery of the ontological questions involved in Minimalist art led Atkinson and Baldwin to turn their eyes to “conditions of spectatorship, of physical and cultural location and of conceptual identification.” See Harrison, “The Late Sixties in

London and Elsewhere,” *1965-1972 When Attitudes Became Form* (Cambridge, England: Kettle’s Yard Gallery, 1984), 11. It is, therefore, natural that the first works of the group dealt with the conditions of presenting and viewing non-materialistic things such as temperature and air. Their first product was a sort of “environmental” show, which consisted of air from air-conditioning. In 1967, Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin focused on how to select indicators for the exhibition of a “non-entities model.” See Art & Language, “Frameworks 1966-67,” *Art & Language* (Eindhoven: Municipal van Abbemuseum, 1980), 1.

¹⁵³ Art & Language, “Moti Memoria,” *The Impossible Document*, 56-7.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 65.

¹⁵⁵ *Art & Language*, 1980, 20.

¹⁵⁶ Decter, 86.

¹⁵⁷ Weiner published 24 works in the *Statements* in an edition of 1,025. Without any illustrations, each statement consists of a simple sentence, such as “a two inch wide one foot deep trench cut across a standard one car driveway” and “an amount of paint poured directly upon the floor and allowed to dry.”

¹⁵⁸ David Batchelor, “Many Colored Objects Placed Side by Side to Form a Row of Many Colored Objects,” *Lawrence Weiner* (London: Phaidon, 1998), 76.

¹⁵⁹ See “Art Without Space: A symposium moderated by Seth Siegelaub with Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler and Joseph Kosuth,” *Lawrence Weiner*, 1998, 96.

CHAPTER 5

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF DISAPPEARANCE

Life is a pursuit of consciousness.
-- On Kawara.¹

Another Dream

On September 10, 1966, Kawara wrote the following as a subtitle for his date painting of the day: “A razor is getting in between my teeth so that I cannot close my mouth.” This surreal image was a scene from a dream he had the night before. According to Teresa O’Connor, a friend and neighbor of Kawara’s, he visited her overwhelmed with the razor dream, and explained to her that the dream was due to his date paintings, since the paintings resembled “the gray slotted blade of a double-edged razor.”² Kawara decisively self-diagnosed the nightmare as reflective of his daily obsessions, as he had been experimenting with diverse monochrome gray tones for his date paintings for nine months. Like his dream from October 1956, in which he was suffocated by a white mobile mass, this dream from ten years later illustrates Kawara’s subconscious overshadowed with threatening things like a sharp razor, perhaps indicating his complex mind oscillating between anxiety and obsession about the activity of painting the date on canvas. Yet in contrast to his use of the first dream as inspiration for a future cinematic project, Kawara immediately interpreted the second dream as a sign of his fear of his own work, thus admitting feeling besieged by his new project. It is ironic, given his fixation on his teeth in the dream, that he ended up losing his real teeth later, as if the dream foretold his future.³

During 1966, Kawara increasingly identified himself with the date painting project, as he produced as many as two hundred forty one date paintings in diverse formats—from types A (8”x10”) to F (41”x56-1/2”)—and background colors—different shades of blue, red and grey.⁴ The subtitles of date paintings of the same year demonstrate this gradual transformation. Long before the dream, Kawara confessed, “I am afraid of my ‘Today’ paintings,” on May 29, 1966. On March 29, two months before this confession, he wrote, “I didn’t sleep well last night,” as if his nights were already disturbed by the fear of commitment to painting dates. The subtitle of September 10 should thus be understood in the context of these series of Kawara’s confessions on his uncertainty or fear about his own work. Reminiscent of his earlier drawings of horrific murders in Japan, the scene of a razor moving across his teeth suggests how the artist could be vulnerable to his own products, although it occurred in an unconscious state.

The image of Kawara losing control over his own works, as I will discuss, anticipates his later gradual, calculated disappearance from his autobiographical work. In the early 1970s, Kawara’s confessions and personal observations vanished from the date painting journals. His biographical information for exhibition catalogues was reduced to the number of days that he had lived up until the first day of any given exhibition. This reformulation of a personal history was reinforced by his new series *I Am Still Alive* (Fig. 5), which efficiently abbreviated his living into a simple existential statement, “I Am Still Alive,” which also began in January 1970. At the same time, the whole myth of silence settled in around him, although he did meet, not for interviews but for business and friendship, critics, curators, and visitors, through only if the number of people did not exceed more than six in one meeting.

Art as Path to Self-Perfection

In an essay written after his 1956 dream, Kawara confessed that he immediately fell in love with cinemascope, but then leapt to a question regarding the quality of cinemascope, whether it would “capture the material as quantity.”⁵ Inspired by the expansion of the phantasmal white mass in his dream, he had asked, “When quantity exceeds a certain limit, does it not necessarily mean a change in quality as well?”⁶ Rather than trying to find the cause of the dream, he perceived the incident like a scientist investigating phenomena, analyzing it in terms of a binary relationship between quantity and quality. He relied on Matisse’s idea of blue to support his idea: “Matisse said that a large amount of blue is more blue than small amount of blue.”⁷ His observation of quantity vs. quality in the white mass led him further to imagine his own future film project: a close-up scene of kissing displayed in cinemascope. The enlarged lips and pockmarked skin of the two lovers, he argued, would reveal the “depth of humanity,” the over-all theme of his works in the Japanese period.⁸

Though the film project mentioned in the essay was never realized, the essay remains useful as it provides a glimpse into how Kawara intertwines art and life. When asked in 1985 if he would have made a completely different kind of art if he had lived in different circumstances, he replied, “[i]f my experience of life changed, my art would change.”⁹ Since his debut at the age of nineteen, Kawara has embraced and perceived the world, despite occasional hesitations, through the eyes of an artist. His attitude has been complexly multi-faceted, comprising elements, logical and illogical, shy and aggressive, socially-driven and individualistic, and philosophically-minded and business-oriented.

His sources of inspiration encompass a territory stretching from his dreams to people he encountered on the street, and from the news of a flood to the news of a postal strike. Yet Kawara approached his subjects in a highly controlled manner, from the surreal images in the 1950s to his later telegram series. As Kawara once said, he has been “more of a disciplined controller than a daring provocateur.”¹⁰

Life outside his home country seems to have afflicted him with relative detachment and solitude, and affected his intention to progress from the “depth of humanity” to a search for depth of the self. This search for “depth” of the self often caused self-doubt and anxiety in the face of an uncertain future. While traveling through Europe in 1964, to learn more about European civilization, Kawara faced the dilemma about whether he had to continue to make art or not.¹¹ Since he had been an ardent student of philosophy, history and religion since his years in the Kinokuniya bookstore, his exposure to the diverse cultures in Mexico and in Europe drove Kawara to rethink the meaning of being an artist. On his way from Toledo to Paris, he visited the Altamira caves in northern Spain. Looking at the prehistoric, polychromatic wall-paintings of bison and other animals deep in the caves probably made under a torch of fire, he came to realize that art is one of the first human inventions, closely tied to the human necessity to communicate.¹² He found the images one of the first proofs of the human urge to communicate with other humans and perhaps with supernatural beings. He came to see the creation of images as a survival skill for humans along with other revolutionary skills, such as making fire.¹³ The realization that art occupies an integral part of human history as a carrier of human consciousness and intelligence drove the young artist to redefine his role modeled after the unknown prehistoric artists. As the earlier humans used images of

animals to transfer information to others and enhance shamanistic power for their community or tribe, he aspired to do the same with his art.¹⁴ Kawara's Altamira episode epitomizes his newly-awakened perception of art as a part of the whole of humanity rather than as mere visual invention for its own sake or an embodiment of beauty encouraged by modern aesthetics. This mystifying view of art provided a basis for his work after 1964, thus distinguishing Kawara from other language-based artists.

Kawara's enlightenment at Altamira may account for why he was attracted to the esoteric writings of George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1877-1949) in the 1970s.¹⁵ Like Kawara, Gurdjieff was a wanderer and an exile. Originally born and raised in Alexandropol (now Gumri), Armenia—a region where Eastern and Western cultures blended—young Gurdjieff abandoned the Orthodox church and regular schooling and instead traveled the Inner Asia and the Middle East for twenty years. During this time, he purportedly met intellectuals in the region, and learned from their esoteric teachings which often do not distinguish between science, philosophy and psychology. He began to preach his ideas about how to develop consciousness for self-perfection in Moscow in 1913 and attracted wide followings, mostly intellectuals such as the Russian writer Peter D. Ouspensky and the composer Thomas de Hartmann. By 1922, after escaping from the Russian Revolution, the Gurdjieff group settled down in Fontainebleau, France, south of Paris, and established the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. After he settled down in France, the spiritual teacher received students from England and the U.S. including Maurice Nicoll, Jane Heap, and Katherine Mansfield, Stanley Nott, and Kathryn Hulme. After Gurdjieff's death in 1949, the Gurdjieff Foundation was

established in Paris by his closest pupil and collaborator, Jeanne de Salzmann. It still maintains many branches all over the world, including in New York and London.

Gurdjieff's philosophical novel, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (first published in English in 1950), is considered a masterwork that illustrates the philosopher's cosmic (and even science-fiction-like), panoramic view of man's entire life on Earth. The story is narrated by Beelzebub to his grandson Hassein while they are traveling to another planet for a conference, accompanied by Beelzebub's old and faithful servant Ahoon.¹⁶

Beelzebub's story is a celestial allegory with many discursive anecdotes. Beelzebub, a being from an extraterritorial world, used to be a rebel, and had to spend years on Mars in the solar system as punishment. During his stay on Mars, he invented a telescope to observe the neighboring planet Earth. This research led him to visit the Earth in person six times in order to learn more about humans on the planet. During these trips, he sometimes encountered other extraterrestrial beings, like Ashiata Shiemash, who had been sent to the Earth as a messenger from the outer world. Like Beelzebub, Shiemash sought self-perfection in pursuit of higher Reason. Beelzebub tells his young grandson his observations about human history from its earliest beginnings to modern times. He sees that humanity has fallen far away from its source and potential. Humans have thus forgotten their function and lost all sense of direction. Touching on the causes of man's alienation from the sources of his own life, *Beelzebub points in the direction that man could consciously evolve.*

Art, according to Beelzebub, was born out of the human effort to transmit knowledge to future generations in the ancient city Babylon. A long time ago, he explains, the city was full of intellectuals from Greece and other regions. Some of them formed a club,

“Adherents-of-Legominism,” which functioned as a gathering spot for “all the learned beings of the Earth.”¹⁷ A small number of the group members—including an intellectual named Aksharpanziar—believed that “High Knowledge” was a path to “self-perfection.”¹⁸ One day, Aksharpanziar argued in a speech for the club members that art (meaning making artificial things) was needed for humans to make a safe and exact transmission of knowledge to the next generation. With “initiates of art,” Aksharpanziar said, “men of future generations will always be able to reflect upon and make clear to themselves.”¹⁹ Motivated by his speech, the members held an exhibition of knowledge with “minia-images” (or artworks) that had varied colors, forms and functions. Overwhelmed with the flux of items, they soon divided time itself to operate the exhibition more efficiently: a day, and a week as seven days (Monday through Sunday). On each day, diverse human productions were displayed. Tuesday, for example, was the “day-of-architecture,” and Wednesday, the “day-of-painting.”²⁰ Thus, the division of time and exhibitions resulted in the effective accumulating and categorizing of information and knowledge, such as structures and colors. These exhibitions motivated Babylonians—who distrusted their deteriorating human perception—to discover diverse tonalities between white and black. They believed the search was a way to find Truth, which would ultimately heighten their consciousness. At one point, the painters used about 1,500 shades of gray as a result of the movement to counter-act the deterioration of sensibility.

Gurjieff’s idea of an artist (or “he-who-is-occupied-with-art”) as a seeker of knowledge resonates with Kawara’s approach to art, although Kawara came to the idea before he was exposed to Gurjieff’s novel.²¹ It is uncannily coincidental that this model

of an old extraterrestrial sage as a searcher for high Reason echoes Sahara Jiro's description of Kawara as an alien who documented the details of his daily living in a highly-organized manner. Similar to the intellectuals of Babylon who encouraged art-making as an embodiment of human knowledge, Kawara identified his art with self-knowledge and further with knowledge for people of the future, which is the opposite of Kosuth's claim that art is no longer about human beings. Like the Babylonians' experiments with colors between two poles of black and white, Kawara used diverse monochrome colors including various shades of gray in his date paintings. In fact, he did not have any fixed formula for the background colors, which vary from painting to painting. As the Babylonians invented a weekly structure of seven days to organize the exhibition system more efficiently, Kawara increasingly systemized his works following a fixed schedule. It is also notable that, like the Babylonians, Kawara began to coordinate date painting subtitles into names of weekly days on October 30, 1972 (Monday), although the method was to erase the diary-like personal observations and notes, not to construct a system of knowledge as the ancient people did. After that day, "I" escaped from all the subtitles of Kawara's date paintings.

Kawara's identification with the primordial, mystic image makers at Altamira reappeared in the late 1990s when he was asked to design his own room for a new museum in Beacon, New York that the Dia Center of Art constructed and opened to the public on May 18, 2003. The museum was to house works mainly from the 1960s and 1970s, specifically Minimal, Conceptual and Land art. Most of the artists, such as Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, Robert Smithson, and Sol LeWitt were given a separate room for their works in the museum, which was converted from an old Nabisco factory, and provides

nearly a quarter of a million square feet of exhibition space. Kawara requested that the museum install a layer of charcoal or ceramicized red-oak branches underneath the floor of his room to ionize and purify the air in the room—a traditional Japanese construction technique.²² Reminiscent of his discovery of prehistoric human endeavor to create a sacred place under a fire torch in the Altamira, his choice of charcoal (symbolic of fire) or oak branches (a simple, natural element) was intended to chase off contaminated air from the exhibition room so that the visitors would be able to contemplate his date paintings better. His effort was not to purify the room within the already sanitized modern museum space, as elaborated by Brian O’Doherty, but rather to restore life force back to the “white cube”—mystic energy lost by the modern, aesthetically-reconfigured institution. The fact that the layer should remain invisible to visitors demonstrates how much he wanted to intervene in the environment as quietly as possible, and to remain unnoticed in accordance with his own image as a silent nomad.

This creation of a reanimated space for human awakening within a museum space counterbalances *Pure Consciousness* (Fig. 9), a recent show that travels to kindergartens and other facilities for children. Beginning in 1998, Kawara began to display seven date paintings from January 1 to 7, 1997 on the walls of a playroom of a kindergarten he chose. His intention seems to create a context in which his works could be reinterpreted in relation to children’s growing consciousness in a daily environment—not sanitized or specifically designed to present art. Conceived concurrently with and for the Sydney Biennial (1998), the show has traveled so far to Reykjavik, Iceland (1999), Shanghai, China (2000), and Abidjan, Ivory Coast (2000).²³ The usual setting of this traveling show is not particular. Kawara’s paintings remain unnoticeable relatively in the mundane, non-

art space, in which the children would (or would not) recognize the numbers and colors like they perceive other objects before learning that they are paintings, aesthetic objects. The seven canvases are to remain part of the environment for the children who are in a developmental stage before learning the rational and the absurd of the world of grown-ups. For Kawara, the children's space is an ideal place to show the products of his own consciousness so that the children, similar to the prehistoric mural makers in the Altamira, would recognize the works as without any pre-determined or pre-conditioned frame of mind.²⁴ Thus, *Pure Consciousness* is Kawara's most recent, self-imposed task, driven by his wishful idea of becoming a cultivator of human consciousness.

I Am Still Alive: Death as Discontinuity and Continuity

In early December 1969, Kawara sent three telegrams within a two or three day interval to the curator Michel Claura in Paris. The messages of the telegrams were, respectively:

I AM NOT GOING TO COMMIT SUICIDE, DON'T WORRY
I AM NOT GOING TO COMMIT SUICIDE, WORRY
I AM GOING TO SLEEP, FORGET IT

The telegrams were later exhibited in "18 Paris IV. 70," an exhibition that Michel Claura organized in 1970 with the help of Seth Siegelau.²⁵ As immediate precursors of the *I Am Still Alive* series, these three interconnected messages reveal Kawara's playing with words around the thought of suicide that perhaps lingered in his mind. If the first telegram alarms and at the same time relieves the receiver, the second one teases the receiver, as if trying to attract attention. In the third telegram, Kawara abandons playing with the concepts, as if his work of the day is finished. Soon after this, the message of his

telegram was condensed into a shorter and more effective sentence: “I AM STILL ALIVE. ON KAWARA.”

Beginning from early January 1970, Kawara sent the same unified telegram message, “I AM STILL ALIVE. ON KAWARA,” to his acquaintances and non-acquaintances. Why did he start sending these telegrams at that time? It seems unlikely that the artist was actually pondering suicide. During the years between 1968 and 1970, Kawara was having a prolific time. His projects were featured in major Conceptual art exhibitions. He was invited to group exhibitions in Europe and America as well as in Japan, including “Konzeption-Conception” (1969), “The 10th Tokyo Biennale” (1970) and “Information” (1970) before having a solo show at the Konrad Fischer Gallery, Düsseldorf in October 1971 with his *One Million Years-Past*.²⁶ It is probable that he intended to let his friends know that despite his absence from New York, he was well and alive, using the unconventional code of greeting.²⁷ He may have been attracted to the idea that the solemn message of the telegram via repetition could bring attention from, and raise questions among, art professionals without his contacting them face-to-face, breaking away from the serious perception of suicide in Japanese culture. In fact, many of his early telegrams and postcards were sent to museum curators, art critics, or fellow artists, some of whom were acquaintances or people who did not know the artist well. Once he designated the addressee, he often sent the same message, often for several days and weeks. The mechanical repetition of the same message transformed and neutralized the alarming message into a sort of a joke.²⁸

Sol LeWitt was one of recipients who immediately acknowledged Kawara’s playful use of the concept of survival and death. Upon receiving one of the telegrams for

Lippard's chain project in summer of 1970, LeWitt made a conceptual poem out of Kawara's phrase, "I Am Still Alive. On Kawara."²⁹ Beginning with the same phrase, the poem consists of sentences that often omit, reverse and add given words and commas. One sentence transforms continuously into another—for example, from "I Am On Kawara" to "I Am On" and further to "Alive I Am Still." LeWitt intentionally obliterates the meaning of Kawara's original sentence, knowing that the amnesiac sender would understand such deconstructing.³⁰ This last invention among his "I" series finalizes the format of his autobiographical machine, doubled with messages of "a declaration of will and a fateful resignation."³¹ Even after the other "I" series ended in 1979 due to the loss of the stamp kit, Kawara's telegrams continued to reach people all over the world with news of his survival, until telegraph technology became unpopular as facsimile became the common form of document transmission in the 1980s and 90s.

The humor embedded in the *I Am Still Alive* series manifests Kawara's belief that death is not an unfortunate discontinuity with life but simply a moment to move onto another phase of existence. Death, despite the fear surrounding it, is inseparable from life for Kawara. He said in 1996, "[s]ince we come into the world crying, we should go out of the world laughing."³² Thirty years after his dream of a razor, Kawara embraced the view that life is transient and momentary and thus its ending should not be sorrowful. Death can be, as Kawara put, "an essential generator of energy" for the persisting of life.³³ Thus, sleep and meditation are "forms of death" for him, since both momentarily stop the movement of the body in order to rejuvenate the body and the mind.³⁴ His note on the last day of the year 1966 is an example of such a view: "To make a hole in a day as a nap."³⁵ For him, a brief nap halts and temporarily discontinues the flow of the day since time is a

“continuum unfolding in the present” without endings.³⁶ Meditation is similar to death as it accepts the temporality or futility of life. The Buddhist monks’ practice of traveling, Kawara finds, is a form of meditation which they could push until they fail to feel the boundary between the tangible physical world and the spiritual world of mind.³⁷ The traveling or wandering of Japanese poet-priest Saigyō (1118-1190) and poet Bashō (1644-1694), as I discussed in Chapter Three, aimed to cultivate self-awareness or to discover the true way of supreme life, the ultimate goal of a spiritual seeker.

Kawara once acknowledged that he learned his humble attitude to death in Japanese culture, in which homogeneity or “sameness” is revered and people are naturally and necessarily driven to the idea of becoming homogeneous as the “only quality of permanence.”³⁸ This perspective persisted when Kawara once said in his rather paradoxical explanation of death, “continuity means nothing and discontinuity means existence.”³⁹ Translating his dictum, Kawara argued that his date paintings were both “existing and not existing” since the series would never end until his death.⁴⁰ Thus, his work would always be in the process of making before he dies. In an interview he had in Tokyo in January 1979, Kawara opposed a Western view of history as “rejection and severance” and, instead, argued for its “continuity and discontinuity.”⁴¹ Kawara seems to have been preoccupied with this issue for more than a decade. Ichikawa Masa, who had met Kawara in 1969 for a review, wrote that Kawara often brought up the word, “*meimetsu*” (flickering or blinking), during the period Ichikawa was visiting Kawara’s studio in the East Village.⁴² Translatable as “continuity and discontinuity” or “brightness and disappearance,” the word was a clue for Ichikawa to view Kawara’s work as a collection of continuous activities from waking up to stamping postcards, which would

intermittently occur over a long period of time until the end of his lifetime.⁴³ The title of his retrospective, “On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity 1963-1979” (1980), was the ultimate manifestation of such a belief, as it declared his works as discontinuous (or incomplete) while his life is continuous.⁴⁴ By choosing this conceptual pair as the theme of his retrospective, the artist, then in his forties, attempted to make life and death seamless and interconnected. Art, as he stated once, ends as “only death finishes an artist’s work.”⁴⁵

Kawara’s view of life and death expands to the issues of self-insertion and self-obliteration. Some of his works have such an existential or ontological tone in a different degree. The first such group is his typical “I” series such as *I Got Up At* postcards and *I Am Still Alive* telegrams, and *100 Year Calendar* that harkens back to temporal existence in face of inevitable mortality. The second group emphasizes the artist’s daily life and existence, as in his date paintings and *One Million Years-Past* and *One Million Years-Future*. Kawara accentuated his continuation in the second group, though it is not a public project like some of his mail-based works, while he effaced the trace of himself in the first group by making the work indifferent to specific living. Kawara’s *I Got Up At* series attempts to celebrate life in a specific way, while the *I Am Still Alive* series gives a general sense of his existence as opposed to death. The message of a wake-up time on a postcard was meant to be the end of temporary death and the beginning of another day for Kawara. The records of “resurrection from a temporary death” are not for the artist alone.⁴⁶ He sends the information to others, sharing with them a moment of his life, time after sleep. His telegram, *I Am Still Alive*, on the other hand, asserts the existence of the artist himself, breaking momentarily the tranquil vow to maintain silence.⁴⁷

It is ironic that Kawara's stamp kit for his "I" journals and *I Got Up At* postcards was stolen on September 17, 1979 in Stockholm, the same city where the very retrospective "On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity 1963-1979" (1980) was held. As if his idea of continuity and discontinuity foretold the destiny of his own works, the accident brought an end to the series that required the stamp kit for materialization. After pondering whether he should continue the series, Kawara accepted the accident as a signal of ending, allowing them to "die only in its own fashion," in a Derridian manner shown in his critique of Freud.⁴⁸ Upon interpreting Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Derrida suggested that the absence of the account on death in the publication indicates Freudian thought of death as the implicit end of living. Ensured by certain "component drives" inherent in all organisms, any living thing takes a path to death, which for Derrida, is a "return to...the closest to oneself...one's origin."⁴⁹ In a similar manner, the majority of Kawara's "I" series took a natural course to death, exemplifying self-ending as Kawara decided not to revive the discontinued project, although the kit had been returned to him.

Theme of Death and Japanese Conceptualism

Kawara's tendency to center on his life and to favor self-seclusion from the world—an attitude comparable to that of Asian hermits—heightens the personal aspect of his venture. Detecting a serene quality in his work, specifically in his *I Am Still Alive* series, Lippard called Kawara's art "true to the myth of Oriental detachment."⁵⁰ Munroe described Kawara as a quintessentially Japanese artist whose asceticism reflected "an existential *gyo*—the exercise of spiritual austerities practiced in the Buddhist monastic tradition," and whose repetitive registration of time bears "nothingness," a quality that

some Japanese critics, such as Karatani Kojin, used in defining the inwardness of their culture.⁵¹ Kawara's process of observing and documenting the basics of living seemed to be a step closer to obliterating the self or returning to the elements of life.⁵²

Kawara's evocation of death or human mortality in his works, such as *I Am Still Alive* and *One Hundred Year Calendar*, is similar to the subject of Japanese Conceptual artists who also explored the theme of death as part of their search for significance of being or existing in the 1960s and 1970s. Certain artists in Japan, such as Yutaka Matsuzawa (1922-1997) were interested in metaphysics, cosmology, the alchemy of Mahayana Buddhism, and modern science. The School of Metaphysics, as Munroe calls it, or *Gainen-ha* (Conceptual School), became active in the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on the philosophical nature of time and space, and the ways in which human existence, affected by those two conditions, could become more humble and receptive to the present.⁵³ In contrast to some Euro-American Conceptual artists in the 1960s, such as Kosuth and Art & Language, who were more concerned with subverting the traditions of conventional painting and sculpture by using the medium of language, their Japanese counterparts seem to be engaged in searching for the substance of human being through an unassuming approach to life and death expressed in words. While other artists such as Smithson and Long, focused on the relation between human perception and the natural environment, Japanese Conceptualists turned their attention to existence and the meaning of life, often combined with a nihilistic view of human existence. Death, or the "concern for nothingness," as Bereday put it in 1972, thus seems to remain one of the "most truly Japanese themes" for some contemporary artists in and from Japan.⁵⁴

For the 10th Tokyo Biennale (May 1970), five years after the group show in Japan, “Exhibition of Japanese Artists Abroad, Europe and America” (1965), Kawara presented his new series, *I Am Still Alive*—which he began in New York in January of the same year—to a Japanese audience.⁵⁵ Matsuzawa showed his signature work *My Own Death* (1970) for the same show. A slightly modified version of Matsuzawa’s work was later shown in the Fifth Japan Art Festival in New York in December 1970.⁵⁶ The work consists of an empty gallery with a large sign that reads as follows:

MY OWN DEATH
(Paintings existing only in time)

When you go calmly across this room, go my own death across your mind in a flash of lighting, that is my future genuine death and is similar not only to your own future death but to past hundred millions of human beings’ death and also to future thousand trillions of human beings.⁵⁷

The Tokyo exhibition, subtitled “Man and Matter,” was the first forum in which both Kawara and Matsuzawa participated. The exhibition, curated by the critic Nakahara Yusuke, featured many international artists who were working with Minimal, Land, and Conceptual art, including the two Conceptual artists from his own country.

Although the two word-based works by those two artists were produced at a great geographical distance one from another, they possess similarities—namely the theme of sharing the idea of one’s death with the viewers. This coincidental similarity led to a telegram from Kawara to Matsuzawa in Japan on July 17, 1970—I AM STILL ALIVE. ON KAWARA—and to a meeting with Matsuzawa in Japan while Kawara was visiting his home country between December 1970 and January 1971.⁵⁸

Matsuzawa is often considered the pioneer of Conceptual art in Japan.⁵⁹ The Japanese artist, similar to Kosuth in New York, represented the loose group of Conceptual artists in

Japan, establishing a *gainen geijutsu* (concept art) entirely based on Japanese culture.⁶⁰ Having studied and practiced diverse forms of art, from architecture to poetry, the Japanese artist became active in *Alpha Geijutsu Jin* (Alpha Art Circle), an interdisciplinary group that consisted of figures from the fields of science, economics, music, design, and poetry. After two years (1956-1957) in New York studying philosophy and religion at Columbia University, Matsuzawa debuted in the 1959 Yomiuri Independent. Matsuzawa began to denounce materiality in his art and instead ventured into “nonsensical” works and “anticivilization” acts in 1964, after hearing a mysterious command to discard objects, the year in which Kawara began to explore the possibility of using words for his paintings.⁶¹ Matsuzawa sought an art that would go beyond the human senses in a rather esoteric way, using terms such as “nothing,” “Nil”, and “void.”⁶² An evocation of Buddhism is evident when Matsuzawa distributed 10,000 copies of a handbill entitled *Ψ Dead Body Ψ Remains* (1964), which contained three geometric diagrams, each divided into nine sections, simulating a Shingon *mandala* configuration. After the work, Matsuzawa sent out postcards inscribed with phrases like, “Picture Showing Spirit in the Mist” or “The Picture Which Is Not Seen and Which Cannot Be Seen,” which preceded Kawara’s postcard series.⁶³

Matsuzawa’s employment of esoteric Buddhist ideas to overcome materiality contrasts with analytical conceptualism in New York and other Western places, where artists sought relatively “de-materialized” works, such as mechanically reproduced images or language-based works, in an attempt to question and refuse the established pre-conditions and conditions of art. Language, the ultimate means to probe what makes art for artists like Kosuth, remains just one among many useful means for this Japanese artist, a means

to evoke poetically the weight of death inherent in living. Matsuzawa embraced art as a way to open up the fear and angst of facing death, or of accepting the fact that life is ultimately futile and empty. Connecting the temporal to the eternal, the Japanese metaphysical artist viewed death as the ultimate destination of life. This conceptual approach to a “pure, ‘conservative’ expression of the Buddhist heritage in Japanese culture” was praised by the curator, Edward Fry, who argued in 1971 that Matsuzawa’s “renunciation of aesthetic ego” and “unification of art with life” might provide an alternative to and critique of that aspect of Western aesthetics that emphasizes form over content.⁶⁴

Kawara’s focus on human life and death as a theme resonates with Matsuzawa’s attachment to the Asian religion. Kawara subtly deals with the theme in an aloof, detached position as Matsuzawa did. Yet the former integrates element of humor and light-heartedness while the latter approaches the same subject in a more serious, cautious manner. It should be noted that, however, despite their limited contact, due to geographical distance, both attempted simultaneously to overcome conventional concepts of art by relying on the spiritual and the invisible as the content of some their projects. This attitude of seeing art as an extension of life may have led both of them to choose the mail system in order to disseminate their works: Matsuzawa began to use the form of the postcard or handbill in 1964, and Kawara’s first postcard was sent in May 1968 while he was in Mexico.

Autobiographical Mechanism

Most of Kawara's works after 1966 generally suggest stories of the author. His daily activities are categorized under specific subjects: "I Met," "I Went," "I Read," and "I Got Up At," etc. Integrating fragments of his life into his work and blurring the borderline between the two, Kawara creates a self-portrait without relying on conventional facial imagery but rather on fragments of his life. His autobiography or self-portrait calls for detachment and an objectification of the artist's self. In the process of objectification, the artist sees himself as "the other" or dispassionately observes himself. The artist selectively focuses on himself by omitting, emphasizing, and extending memories and realities. In the process, several factors operate in the process of filtering: the sense of self, of history and tradition, and of various motives and visions for the self-portrait.⁶⁵ The final portrayal of the artist's self is therefore never truly unbiased; it necessarily results in a self-consciously constructed image of the artist.⁶⁶ Each of Kawara's journals is thus a meticulous, enthusiastic documentation of his existence, extracting a particular activity from all of his other daily activities.⁶⁷ Making his life available to systematic restructuring, he becomes the object of the story as well as the subject. Kawara's obsessive attention to himself minute by minute forms the main narrative of his works. His date painting subtitle journal especially discloses—often subtly but sometimes poignantly—how he feels and thinks, and how he spends the day.

Kawara's self-portrayal operates as an organized system. Kawara's self-concept as "a disciplined controller," as often pointed at by several Japanese critics, drove his system of "the self."⁶⁸ Relying on pre-determined systems such as journals, calendars, postcards, and telegrams, Kawara reduced repetitive routine activities into what Joshua Decter calls "systematic construction of an archive of the self," which never shows Kawara as a

whole, but only as fragments.⁶⁹ Kawara integrates two perspectives, subjective and objective, into his way of observing things. He weaves his own experiences into conventional and institutional systems of communication—like the postcard and the telegram, and spatial and scientific systems—maps and calendars.⁷⁰ His formats make his diarist practice simple, automatic, methodical and even mechanical.

Claiming autonomy for art and artists, modern artists carved a model for a modern depiction of selfhood in order to realize a “more profound revelation of individual personalities.”⁷¹ Modern artists including Vincent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse found in the genre the freedom of self-exploration. Through the help of psychoanalysis, initiated by Freud, artists turned to closer examination of individuality as an intellectual task to reveal fundamental truths about human beings.⁷² The experimentation with self-portraiture further expanded to include more radical methods of visual language, such as the disguise of one’s original identity and a total discarding of figuration, often overwhelmed by the desire to obscure the true self via alter egos.⁷³ Among them are Picasso’s Harlequin, Ernst’s dadamax, Duchamp’s Rrose Sélavy, Claes Oldenberg’s Ray Gun, Sol LeWitt’s photographic collection of personal belongings, and Bruce Naumann’s staged self-portraits conscious of Duchamp’s projection of the self onto objects.⁷⁴ These artists’ self-expression traverses a vast scope of visual language, from intimate photographs to erasure of physical presence using innovative artistic styles. As Oldenberg wrote in his statement-like poem, “The Guises of Ray Gun,” the artist’s traces in the modern self-portrait often disappear, and therefore “[o]ne senses him rather than sees him.”⁷⁵

Kawara's self-portraiture follows the evolving tradition of modern self-portrait, a tradition that had allowed artists to discover subjectivity in styles and subjects at least since the late nineteenth century. As with the above precedents, Kawara's self-portraits not only manifest a stylistic identity for the artist, but also the psychology and personality of the artist.⁷⁶ The self becomes a medium for articulating the artist's experience and ideas, and making self-portraits becomes the most effective means of embodying identity. Yet Kawara's overt use of the word "I" differs from the above examples, most of which play with direct and indirect images of the artist. While the prior artists approached self-portraiture as an avenue to enhance the artists' own personae and individuality through physical likeness or veiled subjectivity, Kawara's self-portraiture extends to include simplistic, descriptive everyday language. And unlike his contemporaries, Kawara has maintained an overt, consistent, and systematic use of autobiography as self-manifestation of his "inter-national" existence.

An autobiographical format seems to be a natural conclusion for Kawara, who felt compelled to experience the world beyond Japan through his own eyes, and find his new identity as a "transmitter of knowledge" for the human generations that would continue to survive on the earth, so he envisioned, for one million years. His pre-fixed "I" journals show the autobiographer's constantly evolving, freshened "I," from a young artist overwhelmed with his new projects, to a voluntary exile who reminisces about his past in his home country while reading a newspaper article on, say, Tokyo student demonstrations, to an obsessive diarist recording the names of acquaintances and the geographical scope of his daily life. Describing his daily life illuminates the autobiographer's present, forming a "continuing, reciprocal relationship" between the

past and the present.⁷⁷ Therefore, the subject's consciousness is subject to the viability or fluidity of memories that oscillate between the two tenses. The describer "I" is, as Barthes declared, "always new, even if it is repeated."⁷⁸ Or, more precisely, "I" is always new whenever it is used because it entails different consciousness and memory.

The consistent, "personal," autobiographical narrative in Kawara's Conceptual art has been recognized by many critics including Kosuth, who described Kawara's art as "private" in "Art After Philosophy"(1969).⁷⁹ Japanese critic Minemura accounted for Kawara's art as self-portraiture.⁸⁰ He viewed Kawara's oeuvre as drawn by two principles; one, not to publish the artist's private facial expression and personal life, and two, to behave as if Kawara himself has no nationality.⁸¹ Lippard once wrote that she often found "a sense of Kawara's life and persona" in his confessional narratives probably due to the fact that their "*duration* is pervasive...like one's own life."⁸² According to Weintraub, Kawara is one of the quintessential artists who explored the small territory of autobiography after highly subjective and expressive representations of the self had faded away.⁸³ Not unlike artists who overtly worked on self-portraiture, yet could not conceal their disdain for creating direct physical resemblances, Kawara filtered all the specifics about himself through pre-designed autobiographical frames.

Everydayness is the driving force in Kawara's autobiographical system. During the first several months of 1966, Kawara's subtitle journal for his date paintings lists several observations, feelings and thoughts. For example, his sleepless nights ("I didn't sleep well last night" on March 29, 1966), and the weather of the day ("Fair and cool tonight, low 35 to 40. Tomorrow fair and milder. Outlook: Thursday fair and cool" on April 4, 1967). Although the artist constantly felt the impulse to serialize and repeat several

projects on a daily basis, the detail and focus differs from day to day. Relying on a daily casual discovery, Kawara's system seems to insist that everydayness is "difference in repetition," a logic suggested by Jean Baudrillard.⁸⁴ Baudrillard discusses a differential value in modern art which was skeptical and even repellant of mimetic or copy works. While the artist's gesture and signature differentiate, and at the same time authenticate, a work of art by preserving its true authorship in the world, seriality (or repetition) is essential in contemporary art, such as Pop art, in order to register or bear witness to a systematized world, a world in which modern art has been "assimilated" and "consumed" in everyday life.⁸⁵

Evidence of Kawara's living is replaced and arranged by the measuring units of time, specifically the two tenses of the past and the present, in his works. His date paintings are permanently written in a tense of "now."⁸⁶ He attempts, as Yokoyama suggests, to save the abstract quality of his date paintings by concentrating on the present.⁸⁷ He freezes the date of the day, photographs locations that he passes by—all for the record that will represent his life—and announces to the world the fact that he is still alive today. On the other hand, Kawara's other journals of "I" series or *I Got Up At* postcards series rely on the past tense in order to capture and leave the present on the record. For the *I Read* series, Kawara cuts and pastes scraps of newspaper articles onto a sheet of paper; *I Went* traces the course of his movement and visits to various cities; *I Met* lists the people with whom he had brief or extended contact during the day; each *I Got Up At* postcard was sent to two selected individuals with a photograph of the city where he was staying. These series portray Kawara's life as interlaced with the cultural (*I Read*), the geographical (*I Went*) and the social (*I Met*).⁸⁸

Autobiography in Book Format

Kawara's use of a book format or codex form reinforces the autobiographical nature of his work. He produced five journals in the 1960s, from the pictorial diary of 1964 to the three "I" journals. It seems that in the beginning of his telegram project, Kawara kept a journal called *Confirmation*, which recorded his *I Am Still Alive* telegrams.

"Confirmation" may also have been the temporary title for the new series *I Am Still Alive*, for Kawara's telegram to Sol LeWitt (February 11, 1970) was titled *Confirmation* in the summer issue of the trilingual *Studio International* (July-August 1970), organized by Lippard under the editorship of Siegelau. Since then, this particular journal has disappeared and is currently not listed in Kawara's works. It seems that the artist found it unrealistic to keep track of the telegrams in the journal and decided to let them disappear into the hands of recipients. At any rate, other journals persisted and took over the major part of Kawara's oeuvre, indicating his favor for the codex form, which allows him to work consecutively and cumulatively over a long period of time. His *One Million Years-Past* (1969) and *One Million Years-Future* (1981) projects were also published in ten volumes of bound books, and his plan of making twelve sets of each work to be disseminated all over the world is still underway.⁸⁹

Print forms were also preferred by his contemporaries such as George Brecht, Ed Ruscha, Hanne Darboven, Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, and Lawrence Weiner. The form had also been sporadically used by postwar artists like Dieter Roth and Wallace Berman.⁹⁰ All were attracted to its easy dissemination and, above all, to its low production cost, which they found suitable for language and/or photography-based works.⁹¹ Experimenting with

the printed format as an alternative space for art, artists flirted with diverse forms of publication. Dan Graham and Robert Smithson used magazine articles and advertisements in 1966. Art & Language published its own journal from May 1969.⁹² Kosuth also recognized the rebellious aspect of the form, as Germano Celant has suggested, when he mounted a show, “Fifteen People Present Their Favorite Book” for his Museum of Normal Art in 1967.⁹³ Siegelau pursued the method further to organize several catalogue-only exhibitions for Weiner, Huebler, Andre, Kosuth, and other artists, including the special edition of *Studio International* (July-August 1970).⁹⁴

Understanding the potential of artists’ books as the epitome of Conceptual art, Celant curated “Book as Artwork 1960/1972” in 1972. As one of the first shows of its kind, it covered works from Oldenburg’s *Injun and Other Histories* (1960) to Weiner’s *Green As Well As Blue As Well As Red* (1972).⁹⁵ In the catalogue essay, Celant traced book art as a medium to transmit “dialectical-linguistic structure” and to replace “spatio-visual... structure of object,” analyzing the new form of art that was developing in parallel with other avant-gardes, from John Cage to Edward Ruscha to Mario Merz.⁹⁶ He credited Minimal artists (especially LeWitt) for “radicalizing” the search for “pure abstraction of language.”⁹⁷ It was Conceptual artists like Kawara and Weiner, however, who began to take the “written or spoken word as a necessary part of work.”⁹⁸ Although Celant erroneously wrote that Kawara’s *One Hundred Year Calendar* begun in 1966 consisted of *I Want, I Met* and *I Read*, and *I Got Up*, he acknowledged Kawara as the “first artist to substitute for the object or the event its linguistic symbols” like dates, names, and maps.⁹⁹ The year of 1969 was, according to Celant, marked by the full-scale publication of books as artworks, such as the journal *Art-Language*, *7 Books of Notes and Poetry* by Carl

Andre, and *End Moment* by Dan Graham, which was followed by a succession of book forms by diverse artists in the 1970s.

The fast-expanding form was termed and circulated as “artists’ books” by 1973 when Diane Perry Vanderlip organized an “Artists’ Books” exhibition.¹⁰⁰ Regarded as a product of the 1960s, artists’ books were perceived as a “subcurrent beneath the artworld mainstream” as the next decade approached.¹⁰¹ Many praised the form as an alternative space to “circumvent the commercial gallery system” and to “avoid misrepresentation by critics and other middle people” in the art world.¹⁰² While the artists’ books were varied from a single-item (or one-of-a-kind item) to multiple editions, depending on the artist’s intent, the book form was welcomed for its potential to democratize art or art objects for ordinary people.¹⁰³ Early critics, like John Perreault, had high hopes that the book’s disposable quality would extend the spirit of the 1960s and 1970s. Yet as the decade of the seventies passed, the gallery system co-opted Conceptual artworks into marketable objects. By 1977, Documenta 6 in Kassel exhibited artists’ books as a separate genre, distinguishing the “Concept-Book” from other book-based art.¹⁰⁴ Kawara’s *One Million Years-Past* was shown under the “Concept-Book” category in the Documenta. By then, critics declared that the anti-institutional potential of the form had ended with failure. This gradual institutionalization, Lippard wrote in 1977, reflected that the early hope of democratization of art had turned out to be false, as the elitist, specialized content of the artists’ books failed to attract a wide audience.¹⁰⁵

The form of the journal was not an accidental discovery for Kawara. Since his essay, “Questions on One Original Painting” in 1958, he has been searching out alternative art venues such as journals, books and magazines.¹⁰⁶ Out of the conviction that “art galleries

and exhibitions have lost direct communication with the general public,” he called for art that could be exhibited and shown in publication forms.¹⁰⁷ He argued that in the age of mass media, art exhibition spaces had lost their appeal as public arenas, as films and television predominated. To reach a wider audience, he suggested, artists should invent norms that could have numerous original paintings and somehow retain its originality despite its dissemination in books and magazines.¹⁰⁸ His concept of multiple originals, as we have seen, led to the conception of “printed painting,” which he believed would enable the artist to make original works repetitiously. Kawara attended to the disseminating aspect of art when he began to examine painting as a communication agent. Adherence to a single original work, he recognized, would limit the communicative function of an artwork to a minimum since only a small number of viewers would be able to access the work during a certain period. His “printed paintings” were thus planned to reach a larger public, and were created in large quantity. Kawara controlled the entire process of the “printed painting” from sketches to final products. Thus, when they were duplicated through mechanical printing, he believed the reproduced image maintained the original quality of the work that he wanted.

Kawara’s “I” journals, by contrast, seemed to be planned as a single book, not as multiple originals. Kawara mostly kept a single edition for each journal throughout the 1970s, indicating that he intended to keep them as personal journals, not necessarily projected for viewers. It was only later that he began to duplicate or republish the journals as he needed, mostly for exhibitions and museum collections. The journal for his date paintings—published in several volumes—was retyped in order to clean out numerous notes and corrections in pencil or pen in the original.¹⁰⁹ His plan of making twelve

editions of the two *One Million Years* was put into practice only in the 1980s. It is noteworthy that in 1992 he published four journals—*I Went, I Met, I Read*, and the subtitle journals—of 1969, as if he wanted to provide a perspective on a critical time for Conceptual art.¹¹⁰

New Autobiography

The catalogues of the exhibitions “Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects” (April-August 1970) and “Information” (July-September 1970) show Kawara’s biographical notes: “13,620 days” and “13,703 days,” respectively.¹¹¹ In 1970, around the time that his *I Am Still Alive* series began, Kawara reduced his biographical note to a single one-line of the days that he has lived, without any specific information about his education or birthplace, and without a photograph of the artist. Kawara seemed to have intentionally constructed his new bio as a mere description of how many days he had lived by the opening of the exhibition that showed his work. When exactly he began to employ the numbered bio is debatable, since after 1971 some exhibition catalogues, like the *Guggenheim International 1971*, published Kawara’s birth date and place: “Born in Aichi-ken, Japan, 1933.”¹¹² Kawara may have failed to persuade some exhibition organizers to use his new bio. Kawara’s new bio often brought him into conflict with Japanese exhibition organizers, who, either not knowing Kawara’s change or ignoring his intention, published information about him, such as the name of the high school he attended, or his debut in 1952 in *Nihon Independent* and *Yomiuri Independent*.¹¹³ At any rate, the majority of exhibition catalogues not published in Japanese began to carry the new bio from 1970 onward.

The making of a new, simplified bio paralleled his frequent exhibition exposure from 1970 and his first solo exhibition outside Japan in October 1971 at the Konrad Fischer Gallery in Düsseldorf. As his nomadic life and sense of identity as a “citizen of the world” became more strongly defined, the need to abandon his past may have intensified. On October 30, 1972 (Monday), Kawara further pushed this idea of a citizen of the world without attachments to a point of removing the “I” from the subtitles of his date paintings and reducing all the notes of newspaper news or new words to a simple name of the day—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etcetera—in another echo of the ancient Babylonians in *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*. For someone who wished to detach himself from all given identities in order to be solitary, dealing with details of his own past might have become too specific and burdensome.

Kawara’s interest in portraying his own life as condensed time began slightly earlier, in 1969, with his *One Hundred Year Calendar* (1969) (Fig. 7), his autobiography-in-progress. The work consists of a single-page chart with vertical and horizontal dividing lines, and requires the artist’s final mark on a daily basis until he dies. The chart is composed of one hundred years in one hundred vertical lines and twelve months in twelve horizontal lines that contain small circles indicating a single day. Each circle from his birth date of December 23, 1933 to the present has been painted in yellow or green or red.¹¹⁴ He puts a yellow dot on the calendar if he spent the day without any work. He applies a green dot if he made a date painting, and a red dot, if he has produced more than one painting. Thus this calendar functions as a record of his date paintings, parallel with the journal, and at the same time registers a daily trace of his living. Enclosing his life in a time frame of one hundred years that has been considered symbolic of an ideal life

expectancy, Kawara celebrates and memorializes each day of his presence in this world, and underscores its transience.

Kawara's idea of framing time in a chart goes back to his earlier drawings, *Calendar of 100 Years* (Fig. 83) and *Sundays of 100 years* (Fig. 84), both of which were conceived in 1964, as part of his 1964 drawing book that contains numerous sketches of ideas and unrealized projects.¹¹⁵ As direct precedents of the *One Hundred Year Calendar* (Fig. 7), the two calendars consist of a grid-patterned chart with horizontal lines of months and vertical lines of years in the middle. *Calendar of 100 Years* shows years from 1920 to 2004, while a blank line divides the years 1965 and 1966 as if he wanted to emphasize the beginning year of the date paintings. However, he specified in the upper part that the years could be from 1901 to 2000, and inserted the work "canvas" in the lower right, indicating that he intended to make a canvas-based work. Produced during his transitional period from biomorphic images to grid patterns and words, the two centennial calendars integrate non-figural forms and restructure time in a personalized way. His *Sundays of 100 years* contains years from 1901 to 1987 in the central column arranged vertically, and months from January to December in the central column horizontally aligned. Kawara's attempt to put in perspective human life—perhaps his own life—persisted when he noted an old man's centennial birthday in the subtitle of a painting on October 29, 1966: "Pennsylvanian John II. Newhard turned 100 today."

If *One Hundred Year Calendar* is Kawara's methodical autobiography, *One Million Years—Past* (1969) (Fig. 6) and *One Million Years—Future* (1981) present the history of mankind reframed by Kawara's life, here figured as absence. Dividing human history into the past and the future, with the center as his life in the 1970s, the two works of *One*

Million Years leave out twelve years between the two histories, twelve years of absence of authorship. The former—in ten volume books—spells out the one million years before 1969, while the latter, the future one million years from 1981, is spelled out in another ten volumes of books. The seamless flow of time is arbitrated by Kawara, who audaciously reframes the unbroken human history of two million years around his life, and divides it into two, the past and the future, by inserting his existence in-between. The artist's presence as a historian who is conscious of his location in human history is also felt in his dedication of the two works to people of the past and the future: "For all those who have lived and died" (past) and "For the last one" (future).

Recently, Kawara has been working to turn *One Million Years* into an audio recording on compact disc. In 1999, six years after Kawara's 1993 show at the Dia Center of Art, in which the work was first displayed as audio, the museum published the first CD, in which volunteers narrated years from 1994 AD to 2613 AD from his *One Million Years-Future*. The recording is made of volunteers' voices that narrate in a monotonous tone each year as written in the original books. Played in an exhibition room, exemplified in the 2003 Kassel Documenta, the audio recording creates a hypnotic effect as if time is regulated under a magician's spell.¹¹⁶ In 2000, the Musee d'art Moderne de la Ville de la Paris recorded the years from 998,031 BC to 997,400 BC. And in 2001, the David Zwirner Gallery in New York published 10 CDs—five for the past, and another five for the future.

Silence and Disappearance of the Author

All these transformations between 1970 and 1972 took place in accordance with Kawara's pursuit of a nomadic life at a time when he deliberately attempted to abandon

the Japanese language in his date paintings, replacing it with Esperanto. By avoiding opening receptions or refusing to be photographed, Kawara gained a reputation as a hermit, and was only heard of via sketchy reports and his “I Got Up At...” or “I Am Still Alive.” announcements. Kawara’s communication methods such as postcards and telegrams were the perfect means to fit Kawara’s need to be silent yet to communicate with others, since those methods allowed him to send rubber-stamped, almost identical messages to designated addresses.

As if to remind himself that he was entitled to such idiosyncratic communication methods, Kawara wrote in his journal on October 22, 1971, “The right to keep silent.” One year after that, Kawara’s journals began to show two distinct differences from previous ones. First, after Oct. 30, 1972, “Monday,” his personalizing subtitles of date paintings disappeared. Instead, he simply registers each day with the day of the week. Since October 30, 1972, his date paintings reveal almost nothing about Kawara, except the traces of his hand in the brushwork, which are also hardly noticeable. Also, his journal of subtitles abandons photographs. Kawara made a decision to leave thirty pages of the journal (the number signifying thirty days of a month) blank, after becoming frustrated with photographing the unusually long, dark nights of Stockholm in wintertime.¹¹⁷ These shifts heralded a new phase in his career and life, in which the author retreated behind his works. While maintaining the personal subject, he hid all the details of his living behind the generic expressions of “I.” Any personal observations on world events escaped his journals.

It is notable that Kawara’s note “The right to keep silent” was written in the same month as his first solo exhibition (“One Million Years-Past”) at the Konrad Fischer

gallery in Düsseldorf in October 1971. As he allowed Fischer and subsequently other European dealers to represent him, he might have needed to remind himself of the right to remain quiet when facing the initial dissemination of his work through the commercial gallery system. Kawara's first show in the Konrad Fischer is followed by a series of one-person shows in Europe: Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris (November 1971); Galleria Toselli, Milano (November 1971); Galleria Sperone, Torino (January 1972); Galerie Bischofberger, Zurich (February 1972); Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf (February 1972); and Galerie Paul Maenz, Bruxelles (March 1972).

This coordinated effort to vanish, Minemura argued, appeared to match with Kawara's attraction to codes. In his examination of Kawara's works in the traveling show in Japan, "On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity, 1963-1979" (1981), Minemura viewed Kawara's extensive experiments with codes as results of "putting too much responsibility on himself as an artist" and of "possessing his own works."¹¹⁸ Kawara's attempt to communicate with the viewers thus ended with works that de-communicate or non-communicate with the audience, contrary to the artist's own argument in his 1959 questionnaire, which suggested that art is only complete with the participation of the viewers. Kawara's "strategic destruction of communication," as evident in the questionnaire for *The Wrath of the Colony* (1959), evolved later into a "complete halt of communication" in the *Conjunctive Mood: A Project for Printed Painting* (1962).¹¹⁹ It was the beginning of his pursuit of art as "code," reflective of the Conceptual artist's "desire to hide the subject of the artist as an apparent element of his work."¹²⁰ Kawara's voice turned gradually neutral and subdued in the works such as *Nothing, Something, Everything* (1963), *Questions, Give Sentences...* (1964), *Code* (1965), and *Code* (1969),

which reflect an artist who was reluctant to expose his subjectivity. Minemura suggested that Kawara's pursuit of codes resulted in the date paintings in 1966, which had heralded Kawara's inclination toward complete silence and later the independence of his works from the author. Yet Minemura neglected to point out the silent yet confessional author residing in the journal of date paintings until 1972.

In an autobiographical system that conceals the artist's feelings and dreams behind methodical daily documentations, the subject "I" becomes a generic entity, as Decter argued when he wrote that Kawara's subjectivity was veiled behind "the most generic type of information obtainable for an individual."¹²¹ The entire "archive of the self" expelled the author, decreasing the degree of the artist's presence.¹²² The reduction of the artist's ego was pushed to a "point of near-invisibility."¹²³ Thus Kawara's system became a sophisticated diary-like wheel that mechanically generated Kawara's daily routines: what time he got up, what he read and so forth. Kawara's system of structural autobiography appears to have transformed into a uniform, monotonous mechanism that filters his individuality into a pattern. His intimately private aspects did not remain private any longer but became tarnished with repetition and exposure. Kawara's expulsion of "I" made "negation of authorship" unavoidable.¹²⁴ Kawara reverses Barthes's famous declaration, "For isn't the writer dead as soon as the work exists?" With Kawara, the artist chooses to die in order to make his work exist. Kawara once argued that his date paintings in progress were both "existing and not existing" since the series would never end until his death.¹²⁵ Kawara took the reverse course by disappearing himself and allowing his work to exist, since he knew that when he dies, the work would be complete.

Kawara's adherence to the solitary, in tandem with his detachment seems to indicate his preference for silence, which reflects a Japanese depreciation of the verbal.¹²⁶ Favoring silence rather than vocal expression, the Japanese culture has rewarded those who follow this social decorum. In literature and art, the "subtle art of silence" has been valued.¹²⁷ *Haiku* embodies this spirit of quietness, reducing and omitting excessive words, while the Japanese novel favors "suggestion and evocation" over lengthy, detailed description.¹²⁸ This "aesthetic of a disappearance in the order of every day," as René Denzot once called it, was perhaps an expected end for the artist who preferred to distance himself from the center and inhabit the personal.¹²⁹ Kawara's disappearance seems to follow this aesthetic of silence, by omitting his own marks and further canceling out his presence. Kawara erases his footsteps and further obliterates himself in order to give birth to a work. It is doubtful that Kawara will resume control again over the system other than to stop some of the sub-formats.¹³⁰ As he ended some of his "I" series when he lost his stamp kit in Stockholm in 1979, he continues to embrace physical hindrance—such as the disappearance of the telegraph machine—as a natural cause of the death of his work. The disappearance may have been Kawara's attempt to create more space for the reader, a space in which the reader can extend his/her own experiences and memories to the painting.

NOTES

¹ Kawara's statement during a conversation with Linda Weintraub. See Weintraub, "On Kawara: Self-documentation," *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s-1990s* (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, 1996), 58.

² Teresa O'Connor, "Notes: On Kawara's I Am Still Alive," *On Kawara: Date Paintings in 89 Cities* (Rotterdam: Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, 1991), 246.

³ O'Connor reports the story: "Once On visited me and asked me if I noticed anything different about him. No, I noticed nothing different. Then he told me that he'd just gotten his false teeth. He had gladly had most of his teeth extracted." See O'Connor, 246.

⁴ The subtitle journal of 1966 shows that Kawara produced seven types of canvases that year, which he categorized alphabetically: A (8"x10"), A' (8"x16-1/2"), B (10"x13"), C (13"x17-1/4"), D (18"x24-3/8"), E (26"x35-7/8"), and F (41"x56-1/2"). Among them, A and B were his favorite types: he painted ninety three As and ninety seven Bs in the same year.

⁵ Kawara, "Essay: Dream of Cinemascope," *Bijutsu Techo* 115 (October 1956): 61. Translated by Hiroko Sumi under the author's commission.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ David Higginbotham, "Of windows and vases," *On Kawara: le consortium* (Dijon, 1985), n.p.

¹⁰ Matsuoka Seigow, "Ars Magna of a Day," *On Kawara* (Nagoya: Akira Ikeda Gallery, 1984), n.p.

¹¹ Roland Waspe, "On the Way: 1964 Paris – New York," *On Kawara: 1964 Paris – New York Drawings* (Kustverein St. Gallen: Kunstmuseum, 1997), 14.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Kawara emphasized these elements during a conversation with the author in March 2002.

¹⁴ G.I. Gurdjieff, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (New York: Penguin Press, 1964, 1999), 457. This book was originally published in 1950.

¹⁵ Jonathan Watkins, "Survey: Where 'I Don't Know' Is the Right Answer," *On Kawara* (London: Phaidon, 2002), 82. Kawara also recommended Gurdjieff to me in our meeting of March 2, 2002 to read a book by Gurdjieff, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (1950).

¹⁶ See Terry Winter Owens and Suzanne D. Smith. "All and Everything: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson," *Mystic Arts Book News* No. 78 (1964); reprinted in Gurdjieff International Review in www.gurdjieff.org.

¹⁷ Gurdjieff, 453-54.

¹⁸ Ibid., 454.

¹⁹ Ibid., 462.

²⁰ Ibid., 464-65. Monday is the “day-of-religious-and-civil-ceremonies”; Thursday is the “day-of-religious-and-popular-dances”; Friday, the “day-of-sculpture”; Saturday, the “day-of-the-mysteries” or the “day-of-the-theater”; and Sunday, the “day-of-music-and-song.”

²¹ Ibid., 496.

²² Lynne Cooke, “Tribute,” *On Kawara* (London: Phaidon, 2002), 23. See also Michael Kimmelman, “The Dia Generation,” *New York Times*, April 6, 2003.

In fact, Kawara’s collaboration with Dia dates back to his 1993 show at the Dia in Chelsea, Manhattan. During that one year-long exhibition, Kawara changed the display every month, switching from date paintings of 1966 to those from 1967, and finally to works from 1991.

²³ The first show was held at Darlinghurst Public School in Sydney in 1998; the second show, at the Children’s Department in the Reykjavik School of Art in 1999; the third one, for Shanghai Biennial in 2000; and the fourth, at the Centre for the Protection of Children, Institute of Social Formation, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in 2000.

²⁴ Watkins, 105.

²⁵ Dated December 6, 8, and 11, the telegrams were exhibited in “18 Paris IV. 70,” curated by French critic and curator Michel Claura at 66 rue Mouffetard in Paris in April 1970. See Chapter Four for more details.

²⁶ During my conversation with Kawara in July 2002, he told me his initial plan to not sell his works entirely, but later changed the plan not to sell the works from 1966 to 1970 due to Konrad Fischer’s persuasion and Kawara’s own financial situation.

It is notable that Kawara chose ten volumes of *One Million Years-Past* instead of his signature date paintings for his first solo show after 1965. The documentary photographs of this show and subsequent shows in other European venues are available in *On Kawara: Whole and Parts, 1964 – 1995* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1996).

²⁷ Dan Cameron, “The On Kawara Story,” *Arts Magazine* 61 (October 1986): 38.

²⁸ Garry Neill Kennedy reports an anecdote in which a colleague was surprised after receiving a telegram from a Japanese artist who announced that he was ‘still alive.’ See “Tribute: Testimonies and Reflections on On Kawara,” *On Kawara* (London: Phaidon, 2002), 25.

²⁹ See *Studio International* (July-August 1970): 37.

³⁰ This kind of response or collaborative action was common at the time among artists who were exploring varied media and methods to overcome conventional art distribution networks. For example, Christine Kozlov, a fellow artist and frequent visitor to Kawara's studio, also used a Western Union telegram for her piece for the exhibition "Information" (1970).

³¹ Kathryn Chiong, "Kawara On Kawara," *October* 90 (Fall, 1999): 68.

³² Weintraub, 57.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kawara's subtitle journal on December 31, 1966.

³⁶ Weintraub, 58.

³⁷ Ibid., 57.

³⁸ Bereday writes, "Kawara has remarked that while variety and difference are Western positive values, for the Japanese 'sameness,' within the life continuum, is the only quality of permanence. Hence Japanese experimentalists find speculation with the idea of death so natural and so attractive." Mary Hale Bereday, "Japanese Artists in New York City," Ph.D. Dissertation, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1972, 151-157.

³⁹ Lippard had a telephone conversation with Kawara. See Lippard, "Just in Time: On Kawara," *On Kawara 1967* (Los Angeles: Otis Art Institute Gallery, 1977), n.p.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Kawara said to her, "I die once so I have only one life. Literally speaking, continuity means nothing and discontinuity means existence. The *Today* series started and has not ended, so one could describe it as existing and not existing work."

⁴¹ Minemura Toshiaki "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1," *Mizue* (March 1981): 59. He quotes from his own "Tokyo Memo," which he made during the conversation with Kawara in January 1979.

⁴² Ichikawa wrote "From the 9th Contemporary Japanese Art Exhibition: On Kawara's flickering information which rejects a palace of image" in the magazine *SD* (July 1969); quoted in Minemura, "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1," 57.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Miyajima Hisao, "Coming of the Season of Retrospective: Exhibition of Kawara On," *Bijutsu Techo* 482 (June 1981): 231. "On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity, 1963-1979" was held in the National Museum of Art, Osaka from 5/17-6/16, 1981, after stopping at venues like Museum Folkwang, Essen (January 30-March 15, 1981); and Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (March 22-May 3, 1981)

⁴⁵ Bereday, 151-157.

⁴⁶ Minami Yusuke, "Travel and Time," *On Kawara—Whole and Parts 1964 – 1995* (Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 1998), 39.

⁴⁷ Alexandra Munroe, "A Box of Smile: Tokyo Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and the School of Metaphysics," *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 221-22.

⁴⁸ Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 358. This was inspired by Kathryn Chiong's notes in her "Kawara On Kawara," *October* 90 (Fall 1999), 66.

⁴⁹ Derrida, 355-56.

⁵⁰ Lippard, "Just in Time: On Kawara," n.p.

⁵¹ Munroe, 221-22.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 222. Others include Takamatsu Jiro, Okazaki Kazuo, Kawaguchi Tatsuo, Muraoka Saburo, Wakabayashi Isamu, and Miyawaki Aiko.

Kawara associated with Takamatsu between 1967 and 1971. Kawara's journal entry on Oct. 28, 1967 shows the contact of the two: "Jiro Takamatsu called me up this afternoon when I was reading 'Ninjabugeicho'." Kawara and Takamatsu were invited together as Japanese representatives to the "Guggenheim International" in 1971, which featured Conceptual artists like Kosuth, Darboven, and Morris.

⁵⁴ Bereday, 63.

⁵⁵ The 10th International Art Exhibition (a.k.a Tokyo Biennale) was held in May, 1970 at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art. The commissioner Nakahara Yusuke gathered under the subtitle, "Between Man and Matter," thirteen Japanese artists and twenty seven international artists. It is notable that Takamatsu Jiro was also in the show. Among the non-Japanese participants were Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Christo, Jan Dibbets, Hans Haacke, Jan Kounelis, Sol LeWitt, Mario Merz, Bruce Nauman, and Richard Serra.

⁵⁶ The translation is as follows: “Now I hand my future death over to you who are passing here by. At the exact same time in a cavern in a central high land in Japan I extract your two hearts from under your breasts and let ‘em fly into the milk white mist that is characteristic around there.” See *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition* (New York: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Tokyo: Japan Art Festival Association, 1970), n.p.

The catalogue of the “Japanese Art after 1945” contains the first version. See Munroe, 223.

⁵⁷ See *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition*, n.p.

⁵⁸ Kawara confirmed that he had met Matsuzawa between 1970 and 1971.

⁵⁹ Munroe, 223.

⁶⁰ Reiko Tomii, “Concerning the Institution of Art: Conceptualism in Japan,” *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 17.

⁶¹ This revelation is recorded in “*Matsuzawa Yutaka jihitsu nenpu 1922-2222*,” *Kinan* 13 (1982), 51. See Tomii, 19. According to Tomii, Matsuzawa heard a voice, ‘Vanish the objects!’ while he was awaking from sleep early in the morning on June 1st, 1964. By June 4th, 1964, he composed a handwritten manifesto in a 3x3 Mandala format, “A Brief Report on the Discovery of the Origin of Non-Sensory Painting,” which was mailed to a few people. In the manifesto, he declared:

By now, painting -- and any other forms of plastic art -- has been understood, created, and appreciated through the five senses. However, in the future -- when will it be? --this principle will be completely abandoned and painting will become something that cannot be understood through the five senses. Today, the images of the universe and the elementary particles are conceptually constructed, and thus cannot be perceived through the five senses, but their existences in the cosmic and subatomic worlds are confirmed by means of mathematics and language. Similarly, non-sensory painting will bring about new yet fragmentary images in the meditating mind. ...

⁶² In a flier that he read in a group exhibition, he wrote, “Therein appeared to be almost nothing, it was imperceptible whether anything or nothing was there. Thus, Nil was brimming there. In that ‘void’ thrown over the floor were *chirashi* fliers, printed in the color of blackened blood on paper as white as a bone...” See a translated reprint in Tomii, 19.

⁶³ Munroe, 223.

⁶⁴ Edward F. Fry, "Introduction," *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition*, (New York: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; and Tokyo: Japan Art Festival Association, 1970), n.p. He wrote that Matsuzawa's art could be "a radical critique of all Western aesthetics."

⁶⁵ William L. Howarth, "Some Principles of Autobiography," *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 86-87.

⁶⁶ J. Kirk T. Varnedoe, ed., *Modern Portraits: The Self & Others* (exhibition catalogue) (New York: Trustees of Columbia University in New York, 1976), xxiii. This exhibition was held at Wildenstein gallery in NY from October 20 to November 28, 1976.

⁶⁷ Higginbotham, n.p.

⁶⁸ Matsuoka, "Ars Magna of a Day," n.p.; see also Yokoyama, "At the Junction of Time and Space," *On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo* (Tokyo: Parco, 1991), 58.

⁶⁹ Joshua Decter, "(Re)Reading On Kawara: The Difference of Repetition," *Flash Art* 163 (March/April, 1992), 86.

This systematic archiving is a method that Hanne Darboven, another Conceptual artist, favors. During her years in New York in the 1960s, the German artist witnessed the birth of Conceptual art, and thus became integral part of the new movement. With the introduction of Sol LeWitt (who also introduced Kawara to the "Language" series), Darboven associated with artists such as Carl Andre and Lawrence Weiner, and participated in the first show of Kosuth's gallery in 1967. While she makes drawings with repetitive, serial scrawls and numbers in order to embody her existence out of her bourgeois German background, Kawara is inclined toward paintings that emphasize the individual as a mystical, unfixed existence. See Isabelle Graw, "Work ennobles-I'm staying bourgeois (Hanne Darboven)," *Inside the Visible: an elliptical traverse of 20th century art in, of, and from the feminine*, ed. M. Catherine de Zegher (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 247-55; and "Hanne Darboven," *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing and Archiving in Art*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winsen (Munich: Prestel, 1998), 114-16.

⁷⁰ Decter, 86.

⁷¹ Varnedoe, xi.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., xii.

⁷⁴ Ibid., xviii.

⁷⁵ Oldenberg, "The Guises of Ray Gun"; quoted in Varnedoe, xix.

⁷⁶ Varnedoe, xiv.

⁷⁷ James Olney, "Some Versions of Memory/Some Versions of Bios: The Ontology of Autobiography," *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 244.

⁷⁸ Roland Barthes, "To Write: An Intransitive Verb?" in *The Structuralists: From Marx to Levi-Strauss*, ed. Richard and Fernande De George (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972); quoted in Louis A. Renza, "The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography," *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, 276.

⁷⁹ Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy," in *Art After Philosophy and After*, 27-28.

⁸⁰ Toshiaki Minemura, "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2," *Mizue* (April 1981), 114. Here, he divides Kawara's art into two categories: works of "signs" and works based on "codes" such as letters, numbers and colors.

⁸¹ Minemura, "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1," 56.

⁸² Lippard, "Just in Time: On Kawara," n.p.

⁸³ Weintraub, 52.

⁸⁴ Jean Baudrillard, "Gesture and Signature: Semiurgy in Contemporary Art," *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (Saint Louis: Telos Press, 1981), 105. Joshua Decker uses this concept of repetition in his essay, "(Re)Reading On Kawara: The Difference of Repetition," *Flash Art* 163 (3/4, 1992), 87.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Yokoyama, 58.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Higginbotham, n.p.

⁸⁹ Henning Weidemann, "What is a Date Painting?" *On Kawara: June 9, 1991, from "Today" Series (1966-)* (Ostfildern, Germany: Cantz Verlag, 1994), 54.

⁹⁰ Rot co-edited and published his work in *Spirale* (1953-64) along with Marcel Wyss and Eugen Gomringer in Iceland before founding his own press, Forlag Ed, which enabled him to publish elaborate artists' books like *Bok 3a* and *Bok 3b* in the 1960s. Berman made *Semina* (1955-1964) out of scraps of paper as well as drawings and photographs in the West Coast area. See Barbara Moore and Jon Hendricks, "The Page as

Alternative Space: 1950 to 1969,” and Clive Phillpot, “Some Contemporary Artists and Their Books,” in *Artists’ Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons, (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), 88-90, 97-132 respectively. The latter mentions briefly prewar artists’ interest in printed works (101).

⁹¹ Stefan Klima, *Artists Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature* (NY: Granary Books, 1998), 46.

⁹² Dan Graham’s “Homes for America” was published in *Arts Magazine* between December-January, 1966-67.

⁹³ Germano Celant, “Book as Artwork,” *Book as Artwork 1960/1970* (London: Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd.), 15.

⁹⁴ Siegelaub coordinated Douglas Huebler: November, 1968 as a catalogue show; helped publish Andre’s *Seven Facsimile Notebooks of Poetry* (1969) (along with Dwan Gallery), and Weiner’s *Statements* (1968) (with the help of the Louis Kellner Foundation); and organized *Xerox Box*, another catalogue-only show in December 1968. See Ch.4, footnote no.99.

For *Studio International*, Siegelaub invited six critics (David Antin, Germano Celant, Michel Claura, Charles Harrison, Lucy Lippard, and Hans Strelow) to take charge of eight pages each. The completed edition was published without advertisement in multiple languages including French and German.

⁹⁵ The show was held at Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd., London from September 20 to October 14, 1972.

⁹⁶ Celant, “Book as Artwork,” 15.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-5.

¹⁰⁰ The show was held at the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia in 1973. See Rolf Dittmar, “Metamorphosen des Buches,” *Documenta 6*, Vol.3, 1977, 296; and Klima, *Artists Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature*, 12.

¹⁰¹ Lippard, “Conspicuous Consumptions: New Artists’ Books,” *Artists’ Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, 56.

¹⁰² Lippard, “The Artist’s Book Goes Public,” *Art in America* 65 (January/February 1977): 40; Shelley Rice, “Words and Images: Artists’ Books as Visual Literature,” *Artists’ Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, 59; and Barbara Moore and Jon

Hendricks, "The Page as Alternative Space: 1950 to 1969," *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, 87-95.

¹⁰³ For the appearance of the term "democratization of art," see Klima, 47-50. Acknowledging that he borrowed the expression from writings about the history of publication that dealt with the economic aspect of the business, he attributed the first use to Lynn L. Hershman and John Perreault. The former used it in her "Slices of Silence: The Book as a Portable Sculpture," *Artists Books*, exhibition catalogue, Philadelphia: Moore College of Art, 1973; and the latter, in "Some Thoughts on Books as Art," in the same catalogue.

¹⁰⁴ The Book section of the exhibition was divided into two, "Metamorphosis of Books" and "Concept-Book." See *Documenta 6*, Vol. 3, 1977, 295. The first category included 53 artists such as George Brecht, Marcel Broodthaers, Lucio Fontana, Anselm Kiefer, Dieter Roth, Andy Warhol and etc. In the second category are 12 artists including Kawara, Stanley Brouwn, Daniel Buren, Hanne Darboven, Vincenzo Ferrari, Sarkis, and Lawrence Weiner.

¹⁰⁵ Lippard, "The Artist's Book Goes Public," *Art in America* 65/1 (January/February 1977); reprint in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, 48.

¹⁰⁶ Kawara, "Questions on One Original Painting," *Bijutsu Techo* (April, 1958).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Kawara once showed me the original date painting subtitle journal of 1966, which was full of notes and marks in pencil and red pen.

¹¹⁰ Kawara, *I Went, I Met, I Read, Journal 1969* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther, 1992).

¹¹¹ Donald Karshan, "The Seventies: Post-Object Art," *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects* (New York: The New York Cultural Center, 1970); reprinted in *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964-1995* ((Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1996), 85; and Kynaston L McShine, *Information* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 68.

¹¹² See a brochure for Kawara published as a supplementary to the catalogue, *Guggenheim International Exhibition 1971*, (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1971). Artists were selected under national categories and individually introduced in four to eight page separate brochures. Among the participants were Antonio Dias (Brazil), Daniel Buren (France), Hanne Darboven (Germany), Victor Burgin, Richard Long (Great Britain), Mario Merz (Italy), On Kawara, Takamatsu Jiro (Japan), Jan Dibbets (The Netherlands), Carl Andre, Walter De Maria, Dan Flavin, Michael

Heizer, Donald Judd, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Robert Ryman, Richard Serra, and Lawrence Weiner (United States).

The host museum reduced the number of participating countries significantly throughout the 1960s, but maintained the “international framework” although Thomas M. Messer, Director of the museum argued that “national representation” was no longer a “point of departure.” See Messer’s “Preface” in the catalogue, 9-11.

¹¹³ However, the catalogue of the 10th Tokyo Biennale carries a rather modified version of Kawara’s biography. It specifies his birth date and place but his group exhibitions are limited to ones after 1967. It also shows a “personal history” with his whereabouts from 1933 to 1969 including Mexico, Europe, South America and the U.S. See *Tokyo Biennale '70*, (Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Art Gallery [later The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tokyo], 1970), n.p.

Art in Japan Today (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1974), for example, describes Kawara’s biography without mentioning the new version: “...Born in Aichi Prefecture in 1933, Kawara received no formal art education....” (90).

¹¹⁴ Kawara’s exact birth date is not clear. His *One Hundred Year Calendar* shows December 22, 1932 as the first day of his life. See more details in Minemura, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1,” 56.

¹¹⁵ Waspe, 16.

¹¹⁶ For the 2003 Documenta, a group of volunteers read *One Million Years-Future* and were substituted by audio recording when they were unavailable.

¹¹⁷ Lippard, “Just in Time: On Kawara,” n.p.

¹¹⁸ Minemura, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2,” 116. The show was held at the National Museum of Art, Osaka from May 17 to June 16, 1981.

¹¹⁹ Minemura, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1,” 58; and Minemura, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2,” 116.

¹²⁰ Minemura, “On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2,” 116.

¹²¹ Decter, 86.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Cameron, 39.

¹²⁴ Chiong, 73.

¹²⁵ Lippard had a telephone conversation with Kawara. See Lippard, "Just in Time: On Kawara," n.p.

¹²⁶ Masao Miyoshi, *Accomplice of Silence: The Modern Japanese Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), xv.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ René Denizot, *Mot pour mot: Les images quodidiennes du pouvoir On Kawara au jour le jour* (Paris: Yves Lambert, 1979) in French with English translation, 105.

¹³⁰ Chiong, 59.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the issues involved with Kawara's pursuit of individualism: self-portrayal, reiteration of the self through language, and nomadism vs. internationalism. For this purpose, this dissertation has shed light on his early, relatively unknown works, and restored the connection or continuity between his Japanese and post-Japanese periods. To picture the "whole" scope of Kawara's art, my first task was to trace the several transformations in his work from his images of traumatized humans to his invention of "printed painting"; from his art business with "multiple originals" to his solitary search for artistic identity; from his awareness of traveling as part of his new identity to his interior "mindscapes"; from a search for symbols and characters to the creation of *On-Language*; from his attraction to New York to his strategic distancing from it; from his deconstruction of logical writing to his employment of multiple languages for his date paintings; from his use of confessional autobiographical methods to an autobiographical practice paradoxically based on disappearing.

Another focus of this study has been Kawara's relation to the avant-gardes in the 1960s, specifically to the Conceptual artists both in New York and in Japan, as discussed in Chapter Two and partly in Chapters Four and Five. Contrary to his reputation as a hermit, Kawara interacted with Japanese artists in New York who needed to cross the Pacific in order to pursue visual experiments in the new center of contemporary art. Kawara also associated, through exhibitions and personal meetings, with critical Conceptual artists such as Joseph Kosuth. Amidst the commercializing gallery system

that nurtured “star making” (exemplified in Kosuth), this interaction led him away from the centralizing power of the city as an art mecca and toward a more interior focus.

Regarding Kawara’s persistent use of the personal in a serialized format, I have shown that his frequent use of serialization and repetition dates back to his early drawing series created in Japan, and flows in his later “I” projects and the date painting series. I have also argued that his critique of institutionalization originated from his struggle to create art for the masses and society, not art for art’s sake. His reflections on the art system have continued throughout his career, often leading him to reconsider not only the form but also the content of art. His experiments with language and the practice of date paintings are results of his faith in language as an effective tool and medium for communication and self-rearticulation.

Based on the premise that Kawara’s search for his identity as inscribed in language has characterized the form and content of his autobiographical works—specifically since he left Japan in 1959—this study has shown that his impulse toward narrative has persisted throughout his career. The autobiographical nature of Kawara’s works, as discussed in Chapters Three and Five, has defined Kawara’s diary-like system that operated under mechanical and meticulous observations of the self within daily routines. After 1971, he registered, personal details turned from the specific to the general, at which point his autobiography seems to degenerate into a formalism—a uniform, monotonous pattern. By abstracting the autobiographical, the “I” series moves to another level, in which several forms of sentences both reveal specific information about his activities while diminishing Kawara’s particularity.

As the reception of Kawara's retrospective in Japan, "On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964-1995" (which I have discussed in the Introduction) has revealed, his work maintains a complex yet innate connection to his home country, although Japanese culture and language were always a burden to him. No matter how much distance Kawara put between himself and Japan, the link to his original country remains strong and inevitable. For Japan, Kawara has been a wandering son who is expected to return. Despite Kawara's replacement of Japanese with Esperanto in his *Today* series, and his refusal to work in his native language or to be categorized as a Japanese artist, Japan remains his home—the original home that gave him the name Kawara.

Kawara's date paintings remained the same from the beginning, although the world has moved from the hopeful internationalism of the 60s to the capitalist globalism of the 1990s and the 21st century. In the seventy-one-year-old artist's nomadic wandering, the strategic, critical use of local languages still persists without any preference for a particular language. While his constant awareness of his identity anticipated the identity politics of the 1970s and 1980s—which emphasized the significance of the personal to expose the collectively oppressed or hidden—his practice of asserting the self as a migrant between cultural boundaries became a precedent for a later generation of artists who have focused on cultural translation in the global world in the 1990s. For example, artists such as Antoni Muntadas have explored how diverse communicative codes can be translated and how the translation can affect our perception of culture.¹ The concept of cultural translation has advanced in postcolonial theories, coinciding with political and economic globalization, the late-capitalist drive to open up third world countries' markets—a drive more intense since the demise of the Soviet Union.² The later artists are

thus not as optimistic as Kawara has been. They aggressively traverse national, political, economic, cultural and linguistic boundaries in order to reveal the particular, individual characteristics of each culture that do not necessarily cooperate with late capitalism's vision of a mutually-benefiting world.

NOTES

¹ Since 1995, Muntadas has dealt with global issues under the title *On Translation*. Over twenty projects have been carried out in the cities such as Helsinki, Barcelona, Tokyo, and Paris, raising questions about art's audience, currencies, telecommunications, and the internet. See *Muntadas: On Translation* (Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2002).

² See Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993); Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

NOTE TO USERS

Copyrighted materials in this document have not been scanned at the request of the author. They are available for consultation in the author's university library.

346-441

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Beverly. "Locating the International: Art of Brazil and Argentina in the 1950s and 1960s." Ph.D. Dissertation, Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 2000.
- Adams, Brooks. "Proliferating Obsessions." *Art in America* 78 (April 1990): 228-232.
- Adorno, Theodor W. *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*. Translated by E. F. N. Jephcott. London: NLB, 1978.
- . "On the Use of Foreign Words." In *Notes to Literature*, Vol. 2. Translated by Shierry Weber Nichol森. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- . "Words from Abroad." In *Notes to Literature*, Vol. 1. Translated by Shierry Weber Nichol森. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- . "On the Question: What is German?" Translated by Thomas Y. Levin. *New German Critique* 36: 121-131.
- Akasegawa, Genpei. "The 1960s: the Art Which Destroyed Itself: An Intimate Account." In *Reconstructions: Avant-garde Art in Japan 1945-1965*. Oxford, England: Museum of Modern Art, 1985.
- Akita, Yuri. "Unlimited Pessimism." *Mizue* 921 (December 1981): 80-85.
- Alberro, Alexander. "Deprivileging Art: Seth Siegelaub and the Politics of Conceptual Art." Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1997.
- . "The Turn of the Screw: Daniel Buren, Dan Flavin, and the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition." *October* 80 (Spring 1997): 57-84.
- , ed. *Lawrence Weiner*. London: Phaidon, 1998.
- . "Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966-1977." In *Conceptual Art: Critical Anthology*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999.
- . "Introduction: At the Threshold of Art as Information." In *Recording Conceptual Art: Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelaub, Smithson, Weiner by Patricia Norvell*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Patricia Norvell. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Alloway, Lawrence. "Introduction." In *Guggenheim International Award 1964*. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1963.
- . "Arakawa's Paintings: a Reading." *Arts Magazine* 44 (November 1969): 26-28.

- , "Sites/Nonsites." *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*, edited by Robert Hobbs. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Amagasaki, Kikuko. "Seeing and Reading." In *On Kawara: Date Painting*. Nagoya: Akira Ikeda Gallery, 1988.
- Ammann, Jean-Christophe, and Mario Kramer. *On Kawara 1952-1956*. Tokyo: Verlag Wilk, Friedrichsdorf, 1994.
- Annear, Judy. "Daughters of Art History." In *Zones of Love: Contemporary Art from Japan*. Sydney: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1991.
- Arakawa, Shusaku. "Notes on my paintings - What I am mistakenly looking for." *Arts Magazine* 44 (November 1969): 29.
- Armstrong, Elizabeth, and Joan Rothfuss. *In the Spirit of Fluxus*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1993.
- Art & Language, "Frameworks 1966-67." In *Art & Language*. Eindhoven: Municipal van Abbemuseum, 1980.
- , "Moti Memoria." In *The Impossible Document: Photography and Conceptual Art in Britain 1966-1976*. London: Camerawords, 1997.
- Ashton, Dore. "Kosuth: the facts." *Studio International* (February 1970).
- Attias, Laurie. "On Kawara." *Art News* 96 (Summer 1997): 160.
- Barthes, Roland. *Empire of Signs*. New York: New York: Hill and Wang, 1970, 1981.
- , "To Write: An Intransitive Verb?" In *The Structuralists: From Marx to Levi-Strauss*, edited by Richard T. De George and Fernande M. De George. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972.
- Batchelor, David. "Many Colored Objects Placed Side by Side to Form a Row of Many Colored Objects." In *Lawrence Weiner*, edited by Alexander Alberro et al. London: Phaidon, 1998.
- Battcock, Gregory. "Introduction." In *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973.
- Benjamin, Walter. "A Berlin Chronicle." In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 2 1927-1934*, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, translated by Rodney Livingstone and others. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999.

- Baudrillard, Jean. "Gesture and Signature: Semiurgy in Contemporary Art." In *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. Translated by Charles Levin. Saint Louis: Telos Press, 1981.
- Benveniste, Emile. "Subjectivity in Language." In *Philosophy of Language: the Big Questions*, edited by Andrea Nye. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.
- Bereday, Mary Hale. "Japanese Artists in New York City." Ph. D dissertation for Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1972.
- Berger, John. *And our faces, my heart, as brief as photos*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.
- Bernstein, Richard. *Ultimate journey: retracing the path of an ancient Buddhist monk who crossed Asia in search of enlightenment*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 2001.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Bird, Jon, and Michael Newman, "Introduction." In *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, edited by Jon Bird and Michael Newman. London: Reaktion Books, 1999.
- Block, René. "On Kawara." In *On Kawara: Berlin 1976-1986*. Berlin: Daadgalerie, 1987.
- Bourdon, David. "Cosmic Ray: An Open Letter to the Founder of the New York Correspondence School." *Art in America* (October 1995).
- Bourriaud, Nicolas. "The Signature Game." *Flash Art* (International Edition) 155 (November/December 1990): 126-29.
- Brower, Robert H., and Earl Miner. *Japanese Court Poetry*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961.
- Bruner, Jerome. "The Autobiographical Process." In *The Culture of Autobiography: Constructions of Self-Representation*, edited by Robert Folkenflick. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993.
- Buchloh, Benjamin H. D. "From the Aesthetic of Administration to Institutional Critique: Some Aspects of Conceptual Art 1962-1969." In *L'Art conceptuel, une perspective*. Paris, 1989; reprint, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions." *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 105-43.
- Budick, Sanford and Wolfgang Iser. *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Buren, Daniel. "Beware," *Five Texts*. London and New York: John Weber Gallery

and Jack Wendler Gallery, 1973.

-----, "The function of an exhibition." *Studio International* 186/961 (December, 1973): 216.

Burgin, Victor. "The Absence of Presence: Conceptualism and Postmodernism." In *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1984.

Burn, Ian. "The 'Sixties': Crisis and Aftermath (Or Memoirs of an Ex-Conceptual Artist)." *Art & Text* 1/1 (Fall 1981): 52-53.

Buruma, Ian. "Japanese Avant Garde." In *A Cabinet of Signs: Contemporary Art from Post-Modern Japan*. Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1991.

-----, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994.

Butor, Michel. "The Lamp and the Scent: concerning On Kawara." In *On Kawara: Horizontality/Verticality*. Munchen: Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, 2000.

Cameron, Dan. "The On Kawara Story." *Arts Magazine* 61 (October 1986): 36+.

Carron, Natascha. "On Kawara." *Flash Art* (International Edition) 192 (January/February 1997): 104.

Catalano, Berico. "Joseph Kosuth: Ten Year War Against Formalism." M.A. Thesis, Hunter College, 1976.

Celant, Germano. "Book as Artwork." In *Book as Artwork 1960/1972*. London: Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd., 1972.

Chambers, Iain. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

Chandler, John. "The Last Word in Graphic Art." *Studio International* 12/9 (November 1968): 25.

Chave, Anna. "Minimalism and Biography." *Art Bulletin* 82 (March 2002): 149-163.

Cheng, Sinkwan. "Fremdwörter as 'The Jews of Language' and Adorno's Politics of Exile." In *Adorno: Culture and Feminism*, edited by Maggie O'Neill. London: Sage Publications, 1999.

Chiba, Shigeo. *Gendai bijutsu itsudatsu-shi 1945-1985* [Deviations in Contemporary Art 1945-1985]. Tokyo: Shobunsha, 1986.

- , "On Kawara: again and against." *Art in America* 78 (April 1990): 275.
- Chiong, Kathryn. "Kawara On Kawara." *October* 90 (Fall 1999): 50-75.
- Clark, John. *Surrealism in Japan*. Clayton, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, 1997.
- , "Artistic Subjectivity in the Taisho and Early Showa Avant-Garde." In *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s*, edited by Elise K. Tipton and John Clark. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.
- Claura, Michel. "Conceptual Misconceptions." *Studio International* (January 1970).
- Cohen, Michael. "Global Conceptualism: Queens Museum of Art, New York." *Flash Art* (International Edition) 32 (October 1999): 62.
- , "Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975." *Flash Art* (International Edition) 186 (January/February 1996): 100.
- Concannon, Kevin Christopher. "Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1964): A Reconsideration." M.A. thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1998.
- Cook, Lynne. *On Kawara: One Thousand Days One Million Years*. New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1993.
- , "Tribute." In *On Kawara*. London: Phaidon, 2002.
- Corris, Michael. "Ad Reinhardt, the Invisible College of Conceptual Art?" *Flash Art* (International Edition) 178 (October 1994): 49-50.
- Cossot, Anne. "Free animals always have their extinction in their back." In *On Kawara 1954, 1954, 1956, Naito Rei 1996*, Nagoya, Japan: Nagoya City Art Museum, 1996.
- Crimp, Douglas. "The End of Painting." *October* 16 (Spring 1981).
- Decter, Joshua. "(Re)Reading On Kawara: the Difference of Repetition." *Flash Art* (International Edition) 163 (March/April 1992): 84-87.
- Deitch, Jeffrey. "Daniel Buren: Painting Degree Zero." *Arts Magazine* 51 (October 1976): 89.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Denizot, René. *Mot pour mot: Les images quotidiennes du pouvoir On Kawara au jour le jour*. Paris: Yvon Lambert, 1979.

- . "Painting, or Nothing." In *On Kawara*. Frankfurt am Main: Museum für Moderne Kunst, 1991.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- . *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- . *Monolingualism of the Other or the Prosthesis of Origin*. Translated by Patrick Mensah. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Dittmar, Rolf. "Metamorphosen des Buches." *Documenta 6*. Vol. 3, 1977.
- Doi, Takeo. "The Japanese Psyche: Myth and Reality." In *Trauma and Self*, edited by Charles B. Strozier and Michael Flynn. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996.
- Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Downer, Lesley. *On the narrow road: journey into a lost Japan*. Summit Books, 1989.
- Drucker, Johanna. *The Century of Artists' Books*. New York: Granary Books, 1995.
- Dwan, Virginia. Interview by Charles F. Stuckey, 1984. Transcripts and tapes. Archives of American Art, Washington D.C.
- Ebizuka, Koichi, "Shuzo Takiguchi and the Takemiya Gallery." In *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan*. Trans. Reiko Tomii. Tokyo: Tama Art University, 1997.
- Ermen, Reinhard. "On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo." *Kunstforum International* 126 (March/June 1994): 355-56.
- Faulkner, Simon. "Nostalgia in Black, White and Grey." *Art History* 20 (June 1997): 324-31.
- Faust, Wolfgang Max. "Intersecting Parallels: Notes on Kawara's 'Date Paintings.'" In *On Kawara: Berlin 1976-1986*. Berlin: Daadgalerie, 1987.
- Fisher, Jean, ed. *Global Visions: Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts*. London: Kala Press, 1994.
- Fowler, Edward. *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishosetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.

- Francis, Richard. "Your Bag of Thrills." In *Zones of Love: Contemporary Art from Japan*. Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1991.
- Fry, Edward F. Introduction." In *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition*. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; and Tokyo: Japan Art Festival Association, 1970.
- . "Eastern Europe, South America, the Orient and the Artistic Third World." In *Guggenheim International Exhibition 1971*. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1971.
- Fujii, Heigo. "Greetings." In *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition*. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; and Tokyo: Japan Art Festival Association, 1970.
- Fujimatsu, Hiroshi. "Takemiya Gallery and Shuzo Takiguchō." *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964): 64-65.
- Fukujawa, Ichiro, et al. "Discussion: What is Realism of the Twentieth Century?" *BBB* (January 1950).
- Gallo, Ruben. "On Kawara in Mexico." In *On Kawara*. London: Phaidon, 2002.
- Gentzler, Edwin. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London & New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Gessel, Van C. *The Sting of Life: Four Contemporary Japanese Novelists*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- Godfrey, Tony. *Conceptual Art*. London: Phaidon, 1998.
- . "New York: Global Conceptualism." *The Burlington Magazine* 141 (August 1999): 502-4.
- Gordon, Beate Sirota. *The Only Woman in the Room: A Memoir*. Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., Publishers, 1998.
- Granath, Olle. "A Point Between Life and Death." In *On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity 1963-1979*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1980.
- Graw, Isabelle. "Work ennobles-I'm staying bourgeois (Hanne Darboven)." In *Inside the Visible: an elliptical traverse of 20th century art in, of, and from the feminine*, ed. M. Catherine de Zegher. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996.
- Guercio, Gabriele. "Formed in Resistance: Barry, Huebler, Kosuth and Weiner VS. The

- American Press." In *L'Art conceptuel, une perspective*. Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1989.
- Guggenheim, Harry F. "Forward." In *Guggenheim International Award 1964*. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1963.
- Gunn, Janet Varner. *Autobiography: Toward a Poetics of Experience*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.
- Gurdjieff, Ivanovitch. *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1950; reprint by Penguin Press in 1999.
- Hamill, Sam. *Basho's Ghos*. Seattle: Broken Moon Press, 1989.
- Harada, Hiroko. *Aspects of Post-War German and Japanese Drama (1945-1970): Reflections on War, Guilt, and Responsibility*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000.
- Hariu, Ichiro. "Atarashii realism no tameni: Nippon ten ni yosete [For New Realism: on 'Nippon Ten']." *Bijutsu Hihyo* 19 (March 1953): 47.
- , "Return to Existence." *Bijutsu Hihyo* (May 1953).
- , "Kawara On's 'Bathroom': Japan Art Association's Independent." *Bijutsu Techo* 93 (April 1955): 83.
- , "The Frontier of Contemporary Japanese Art." In *The 9th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan*. Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1969.
- , *Sengo bijutsu seisui shi* [Vicissitudes of postwar art]. Tokyo: Tokyo Book Co., 1979.
- , "Progressive Trends in Modern Japanese Art." In *Reconstructions: Avant-Garde Art in Japan 1945-1965*. Oxford, England: Museum of Modern Art, 1985.
- , "Realisme et Mouvements Politique." In *Japon des Avant-Gardes 1910-1970*. Paris: Pompidou Center, 1986.
- , "Japanese Art as Seen in the Venice Biennale 1952-68." In *The Venice Biennale: 40 Years of Japanese Participation*. Tokyo: Japan Foundation & the Mainichi Newspapers, 1995.
- , "The Phases of Neo-Dada in Postwar Art." In *Neo-Dada Japan 1958-1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of "White House"*. Oita City, Japan: Oita City Board of Education, 1998.

- , and Ito Wada. "On Issues of the 1958 Art World." *Bijutsu Techo* 151 (Winter 1958): 1-12.
- , Et al. "Discussion: Toward New Images of Human Beings." *Bijutsu Hihyo* (July 1955).
- , Et al. "Discussion: Problems of the 1956 Art World." *Bijutsu Techo* 119 (Winter 1956): 4-11.
- Harootunian, H.D. "Visible Discourse/Invisible Ideologies." In *Postmodernism and Japan*, edited by Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989.
- Harrison, Charles. "The Late Sixties in London and Elsewhere." In *1965-1972: When Attitudes Became Form*. Cambridge, England: Kettle's Yard Gallery, 1984.
- , *Essays on Art & Language*. Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1991.
- Hart, Claudia. "Exhibition Review." *Artforum International* 26 (April 1988): 139-40.
- Hayami, Akira. "Between Independence and Deconstruction: Categorizing Major Works." *Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 56-61.
- Heartney, Eleanor. "Joseph Kosuth: the Production of Consciousness." *Art Press* 223 (April 1997): 34.
- Hendriks, Jon. *Fluxus Codex*. Detroit, MI: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, 1988.
- Hibbett, Howard. "The Portrait of the Artist in Japanese Fiction." In *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14 (May 1955): 347-54
- Higginbotham, David. "Of windows and vases." In *On Kawara: le consortium*. Dijon, 1985.
- Hijiya-Kirschner, Irmela. *Rituals of Self-Revelation: Shishosetsu as Literary Genre and Socio-Cultural Phenomenon*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996.
- Hiraide, Takashi. "Revolution of Moment – On Kawara as Language." 1995; reprint in *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964–1995*. Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1996.
- Hobbs, Robert. *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Hollevoet, Christel. "Wandering in the City *Flanerie to Derive* and After: the Cognitive

- Mapping of Urban Space.” In *The Power of the City/ The City of Power*. Whitney Museum Independent Studies exhibition, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992.
- , “The Flaneur: Genealogy of a Modernist Icon.” Ph. D. dissertation, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, 2001.
- Holt, Nancy, ed. *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*. New York: New York University, 1979.
- Honma, Masayoshi. “On Kawara Thereafter—A Visit to His Studio in New York.” *Bijutsu Techo* (December 1965).
- , “Japanese Artists in America.” In *Exhibition of Japanese Artists Abroad Europe and America*. Tokyo: the National Museum of Modern Art, 1965.
- Hoptman, Laura. “Down to Zero: Yayoi Kusama and the European New Tendency.” In *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1998.
- Howarth, William L. “Some Principles of Autobiography.” In *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Huebler, Douglas. *Douglas Huebler “Variable”, etc.* Limoges, France: Fonds Regional d’Art Contemporain du Limousin, 1993.
- Ikeda, Tatsuo. *Dream, Reality, Document: One Painter’s Testimony of His Age*. Tokyo, 1990.
- Ippolito, Jon. “Where Has All the Uncertainty Gone?” *Flash Art* (International Edition) 189 (Summer 1996): 83+
- Isozaki, Arata. “Imprint of 1960.” In *Neo-Dada Japan 1958-1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of “White House.”* Oita City, Japan: Oita City Board of Education, 1998.
- Ito, Norihiro, Fumio Nanjo, and Kunio Yaguchi, ed. *Art in Japan Today II: 1970-1983*. Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1984.
- Itoi, Kay. “On Kawara.” *Art News* 97/4 (April 1998): 192.
- Jantjes, Gavin, ed. *A Fruitful Incoherence: Dialogues with Artists on Internationalism*. London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 1998.
- Jones, Derek. “On Kawara: again and against.” *Art News* 89 (Summer 1990): 188.
- Joselit, David. “Object Lessons.” *Art in America* 84 (February 1996): 68-71+.

- Judd, Donald. "Reviews and Previews: New Names This Month - Yayoi Kusama." *Art News* 58 (October 1959): 17.
- Junker, Howard. "Idea as Art." *Newsweek* (August 11, 1969).
- Kaido, Kazu. "Reconstruction: The Role of the Avant-garde in Post-War Japan." In *Reconstructions: Avant-garde Art in Japan 1945-1965*. Oxford, England: Museum of Modern Art, 1985.
- Kamon, Yasuo. "Forward." In *Contemporary Japanese Art: Fifth Japan Art Festival Exhibition*. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; and Tokyo: Japan Art Festival Association, 1970.
- Kamstra, Sabrina. "Exhibition Review." *Artforum International* 28 (May 1990): 207.
- Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Kaprow, Allan. *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1966.
- Karshan, Donald. "The Seventies: Post-Object Art." In *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects*. New York: The New York Cultural Center, 1970.
- Kato, Taneo. "Proof of Living One Day during One Million Years." *Nikkei Art* (February 1998).
- Kawara, On. "Evaluating the Mexican Art Exhibition." *Bijutsu Hihyo* (October 1955): 28-29.
- , "Absentee." *Bijutsu Techo* (May 1956): 80-81.
- , "Kaiga no shinmetori [Symmetry in Painting]." *Bijutsu Techo* (March 1956): 58.
- , "Essay: Dream of Cinemascope." *Bijutsu Techo* 115 (October 1956): 61.
- , "Something Must Be Done," Special Issue on "Kaiga wa doko e yuku—Gendai zen'ei sakka, 32 shi no kiko [Where are Paintings Going?—Contributions of 32 Modern Avant-Garde Artists]." *Bijutsu Hihyo* (January 1957): 26-27.
- , "Questions on Original One Painting." *Bijutsu Techo* (April 1958):
- , "Insatsu kaiga [printed painting]." *Bijutsu Techo*, special issue (Spring 1959): 82-126

- , "The Meaning and the Directions of the Questionnaire." *Bitsutsu Techo*, special issue (Spring 1959): 93-94.
- , "Critique of Cinema Color: *Bride in Ootorijyo Castle* (made by Toei Scope)." *Bijutsu Techo* 126 (June 1957): 74-75
- , "Yomiuri Independent Exhibition." *Bijutsu Techo* (May 1956): 80
- , "Setsuzoku hou—insatsu kaiga no tameno kikaku [Conjunctive Mood –A Project for Printed Painting]." *Bijutsu Techo* (December 1965): 37-39.
- , *I Went, I Met, I Read, Journal 1969*. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther, 1992.
- , and Jacques Roubaud. *Codes*. Paris: Yvon Lambert Gallery, 1996.
- Kennedy, Garry Neill. "Tribute: Testimonies and Reflections on On Kawara." In *On Kawara*. London: Phaidon, 2002.
- Kikuhata, Mokuma. "Inscription of Emptiness." *Mizue* 920 (November 1981).
- Kimball, Arthur G. *Crisis in Identity and Contemporary Japanese Novels*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1973.
- Kimmelman, Michael. "The Dia Generation." *New York Times*, 6 April, 2003.
- Klima, Stefan. *Artists Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature*. New York: Granary Books, 1998.
- Knabb, Ken, ed. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981.
- Koplos, Janet. "The Two-fold Path: Contemporary Art in Japan." *Art in America* 78 (April 1990): 200-11.
- Kosuth, Joseph. "Kosuth Replies to Clauro." *Studio International* (February 1970): 44.
- , "An Answer to Criticisms." *Studio International* (June 1970).
- , "Intention(s)." *The Art Bulletin* 78 (September 1996): 407-12.
- , "Reply to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art." *October* 57 (Summer 1991): 153-61.
- , "Art After Philosophy." *Studio International* 178/915-917 (1969); reprint in *Art After Philosophy and After*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991.

- . “(Notes) On ‘Anthropologized’ Art.” In *Art After Philosophy and After*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991.
- . *Joseph Kosuth: Interviews 1969-1989*. Stuttgart: Edition Patricia Schwarz, 1989.
- Krauss, Rosalind, et al. “Conceptual Art and the Reception of Duchamp.” *October* 70 (Fall 1994): 127-46.
- Lebovici, Elisabeth. “Achever la peinture.” *Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne* 40 (Summer 1992): 12-35.
- LeWitt, Sol. “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art.” *Artforum* 5/10 (Summer 1967): 79-83.
- Lieberman, William S. “Introduction.” In *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966.
- Lippard, Lucy. “New York Letter: Recent Sculpture as Escape.” *Art International* 10 (February 1966): 48-52, 57-58.
- . “Eccentric Abstraction.” *Art International* 10 (October 1966): 28, 34-40.
- . “Just in Time: On Kawara.” In *On Kawara 1967*. Los Angeles: Otis Art Institute Gallery, 1977.
- . “The Artist’s Book Goes Public.” *Art in America* 65 (January/February 1977); reprint in *Artists’ Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, edited by Joan Lyons. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985: 45-48.
- . “Breaking Circles: The Politics of Prehistory.” In *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*, ed. Robert Hobbs. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- . “Conspicuous Assumption: New Artists’ Books.” In *Artists’ Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*. Edited by Joan Lyons. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985: 49-57.
- . “Notes on the Independence Movement.” In *1967: At the Crossroads*. Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1987.
- . “Escape Attempts.” In *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975*, edited by Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer. LA: Los Angeles County Museum, 1995.
- . *Six Years: the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, 1997.
- London, Barbara. “X: Experimental Film and Video.” In *Japanese Art After 1945*:

- Scream Against the Sky*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994.
- Liotard, Jean-François. "The Works and Writing of Daniel Buren: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Contemporary Art." *Artforum* (February 1981): 56.
- . *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Feoff Bennington and Brian Masumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Matsumoto, Toru. "Japanese Art in the 1950s and 60s: Surrounded by a Transparent Wall." In *Japanese Modern Art: Painting from 1910 to 1970*, ed. Irmtraud Schaarschmidt-Richter. Zurich: Edition Stemmler, 2000.
- Matsuoka, Seigow. "Ars Magna of a Day." In *On Kawara*. Nagoya: Akira Ikeda Gallery, 1984.
- McEvelley, Thomas. "I think therefore I art." *Artforum International* 23 (Summer 1985): 74-84.
- McShine, Kynaston L. "Essay." In *Information*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970: 138-141.
- Meyer, James. "Reconsidering the Object of Art 1965-1975." *Artforum International* 34 (February 1996): 78-9.
- . "Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin 1950s-1980s." *Artforum International* 38 (September 1999).
- Meyer, Ursula. "Introduction." In *Conceptual Art*. New York: E.P.Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972.
- Minami, Yusuke. "Travel and Time." In *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964-1995*. Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998.
- Minemura, Toshiaki. "Date Painting as Practice of Life: On Kawara Exhibition." *Bijutsu Techo* 405 (March, 1976): 90-91.
- . "Traveler of Time: On Kawara # 3." 1978; reprint in *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964-1995*. Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998.
- . "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 1." *Mizue* (March 1981): 46-59.
- . "On Kawara: Discontinuity in Continuity—Part 2." *Mizue* (April 1981): 114-19.
- . "Deconstruction and Repetition of Organizing." *Mizue* 921 (December 1981): 74-9.

- . "Blast of Nationalism in the Seventies." In *Art in Japan Today II: 1970-1983*. Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1984.
- . "The Realism of Tactility: Another Japan That Erupted." In *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan*. Tokyo: Tama Art University, 1997.
- Miner, Earl. *Japanese Poetic Diaries*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.
- Miner, Earl, and Hiroko Odagiri. *The monkey's straw raincoat and other poetry of the Basho school*. Translated by Earl Miner and Hiroko Odagiri. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Miura, Masashi. "On Date Painting." In *On Kawara*. Tokyo: Gatodo Gallery, 1986.
- Miyajima, Hisao. "Coming of the Season of Retrospective: Exhibition of Kawara On." *Bijutsu Techo* 482 (June 1981): 230-31.
- Miyoshi, Masao. *Accomplice of Silence: The Modern Japanese Novel*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.
- Miyoshi, Masao, and H. D. Harootunian. "Introduction." In *Postmodernism and Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1989.
- Morgan, Robert C. "Systematic Books by Artists." In *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*. Edited by Joan Lyons. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985: 207-22.
- . "What is Conceptual Art, Post or Neo?" *Arts Magazine* 62 (March 1988): 80-1.
- . "Art Conceptuel I." *Arts Magazine* 63 (January 1989): 110.
- . "The Situation of Conceptual Art: the January Show and After." *Arts Magazine* 63 (February 1989): 40-50.
- . "Word, Document, Installation: Recent Developments in Conceptual Art." *Arts Magazine* 65 (May 1991): 65-9.
- . "Conceptualism: reevaluation or revisionism?" *Art Journal* 58/3 (Fall 1999): 109-111.
- Moore, Barbara, and Jon Hendricks. "The Page as Alternative Space." In *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, edited by Joan Lyons. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985.

- Munroe, Alexandra. "Obsession, Fantasy and Outrage: The Art of Yayoi Kusama." In *Yayoi Kusama: A Retrospective*. New York: Center for International Contemporary Arts, 1989.
- , "Wandering Position: Conceptual Art in the Post-Hirohito Era." *Flash Art* (International Edition) 163 (March/April 1992): 71-74.
- , "A Box of Smile: Tokyo Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and the School of Metaphysics." In *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994.
- , "Morphology of Revenge: the Yomiuri Independent Artists and Social Protest Tendencies in the 1960s." In *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994.
- , "To Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun: The Gutai Group." In *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994.
- , "Revolt of the Flesh: Anko Butoh and Obsessional Art." In *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream Against the Sky*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994.
- Munroe, Alexandra, and Jon Hendricks. *Yes Yoko Ono*. New York: Japan Society, 2000.
- Murayama, Yasuo. "Japan/I Torn Apart." In *1953: Shedding Light on Art in Japan*. Trans. Reiko Tomii. Tokyo: Tama Art University, 1997.
- Nakahara, Yusuke. "Modern Myth." *Bijutsu Hihyo* (October 1955).
- , "Mishitsu no kaiga [Pictures of Locked Rooms]." *Bijutsu Hihyo* (June 1956): 20-30.
- , "Kawara On's Two Series." *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964): 68-9.
- , "The 8th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan." In *The 8th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan*. Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1968.
- , "Contact of Man and Matter: Avoiding Concentration of Trends, 10th Tokyo Biennale." *Bijutsu Techo* 328 (June 1970): 126-27.
- , "Kawara's Early Two Series." *Gendi-no Me* [Eye of the Modern] 320 (July 1981): 6.
- , "Japanese Contemporary Art and Its Milieu: Focusing on the Seventies." In *Art in Japan Today II: 1970-1983*. Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1984.
- Nakajima, Michihiro. "Phenomenon of Fast Changing Art: history of 10 years."

- Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 48-51.
- , "International Exchange and Individual Stage: Tracing Major Exhibitions."
Mizue 920 (November 1981): 42-7.
- Napier, Susan J. *Escape from the Wasteland: Romanticism and Realism in the Fiction of Mishima Yukio and Oe Kenzaburo*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1991.
- Newman, Amy. *Challenging Art: Artforum 1962-1974*. New York: Soho Press, 2000.
- Newman, Michael. "Conceptual Art from the 1960s to the 1990s: an unfinished project?"
Kunst & Museumjournaal 7/3 (1996): 95-104.
- Nickas, Robert. "The 80's." In *On Kawara: "The 80's."* Geneva, Switzerland: Art & Public, 1994.
- , "Picturing the Element of Time." In *Pictures of the Real World (In Real Time)*. 1995; reprint in *On Kawara: Whole and Parts 1964-1995*. Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1996.
- Nierhoff, Wout. "On Kawara." *Kunstform International* 32 (November 1995/January 1996): 376.
- Nilson, Peter. "A Labyrinth in Which We Are All Lost." In *On Kawara: Continuity/Discontinuity 1963-1979*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1980.
- Novell, Patricia, and Alexander Alberro. *Recording Conceptual Art: Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelau, Smithson, Weiner*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Nye, Timothy. "Conceptual Art: A Spatial Perspective." In *The Power of the City/The City of Power*. Whitney Museum Independent Studies exhibition catalogue. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992.
- O'Connor, Teresa. "Notes: On Kawara's I Am Still Alive." *On Kawara: Date Paintings in 89 Cities*. Rotterdam: Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, 1991.
- Oda, Makoto. "The History of an Odd Generation." In *On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo*. Tokyo: Parco, 1991.
- O'Doherty, Brian. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. Santa Monica: the Lapis Press, 1986.
- Ogura, Tadao. "Direction of Realism Debate." *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964).

- Okabe, Aomi. "Action et Avant-Garde." In *Japon des Avnat-gardes 1910-1970*. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1986.
- Okada, Takahiko. "Presentation of Sign as Action of Recognition." *Gendaishi Techo* [Modern Poetry Note] 10 (October 1983): 98-105.
- Olney, James. "Some Versions of Memory/Some Versions of Bios: The Ontology of Autobiography." In *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Ono, Yoko. *Instruction Paintings*. New York: Weatherhill, Inc., 1995.
- Owens, Terry Winter, and Suzanne D. Smith. "All and Everything: Beelzebub's Tales To His Grandson." *Mystic Arts Book News* 78 (1964).
- Ozaki, Shinzin. "Japanese Surrealism in the late 1930s: the "space of formless matter" and the "space of macroscopic creatures." In *Japanese Modern Art: Painting from 1910 to 1970*, ed. Irmtraud Schaarschmidt-Richter. Zurich: Edition Stemmler, 2000.
- Perreault, John. "Legibility," *The Village Voice*, 15 June, 1967.
- . "Word Works," *The Village Voice*, 13 June, 1968.
- . "It's Only Words," *The Village Voice*, 20 May, 1971; reprint in *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973.
- Phillpot, Clive. "Some Contemporary Artists and Their Books." *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, edited by Joan Lyons. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985.
- Porter, Dennis. *Haunted Journey: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Rachwal, Tadeusz. "The Employment of the Word: Writing, Topography, and Colonial Landscapes." In *Technologies of Landscape: From Reaping to Recycling*, edited by David E. Nye. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999.
- Renza, Louis A. "The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography." In *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Reynolds, Ann Morris. "Robert Smithson: Learning from New Jersey and Elsewhere." Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 1993
- Rice, Shelley. "Words and Images: Artists' Books as Visual Literature." *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, edited by Joan Lyons. Rochester, NY: Visual

- Studies Workshop Press, 1985.
- Roberts, John. "Photography, Iconophobia and the Ruins of Conceptual Art." In *The Impossible Document: Photography and Conceptual Art in Britain 1966-1976*. London: Camerawords, 1997.
- Rodenbeck, J. F. "Yayoi Kusama: . surface . stitch . skin." In *Inside the Visible*, edited by M. Catherine de Zegher. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996.
- Rorimer, Anne. "The Date Paintings of On Kawara." *Museum Studies* 17/2 (Fall 1991): 121-137+ (also appeared in *On Kawara: Date Paintings in 89 Cities*. Rotterdam: Museum Boyman-van Beuningen, 1991).
- Rose, Arthur R. "Four Interviews." *Arts Magazine* (February 1969): 22-3.
- Sahara, Jiro. "A Spaceman-Like Earthman." *Geijutsu Shincho* (February, 1972); reprint in René Denizot, *Mot pour mot: Les images quodidiennes du pouvoir On Kawara au jour le jour*. Translated by Sharon Ann Rhoads. Paris: Yves Lambert, 1979.
- Sakai, Naoki. "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism." In *Postmodernism and Japan*, edited by Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989.
- Sas, Miryam. *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Sato, Shigeomi. "Magazine 'Biutsu Hihyo'." *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964): 66-67.
- Sawa, Masahira, and Hirofumi Wada, ed. *Nihon no shururealismu* [Japan and Surrealism]. Tokyo: Sekaishisou-sha, 1995.
- Sayre, Robert F. "Autobiography and the Making of America." In *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Schaarschmidt-Richter, Irmtraud. *Japanese Modern Art: Painting from 1910 to 1970*. Zurich: Edition Stemmler, 2000.
- Schampers, Karel. "A Mental Journey in Time." In *On Kawara: Date Paintings in 89 Cities*. Rotterdam: Museum Boyman-van-Beningen, 1991.
- Schjeldahl, Peter. "New York Letter." *Art International* 13/8 (October 1969): 74-9.
- Segi, Shinichi. "What the International Exhibition Left and the Direction of Japan: More Audacious Rebellions." *Bijutsu Techo* 160 (July 1959): 1-4
- Sherlock, Maureen P. "Exhibition Review." *Arts Magazine* 64 (October 1989): 83.

- Shotaro, Yasuoka. "Prized Possessions." In *Contemporary Japanese Literature: An Anthology of Fiction, Film and Other Writings Since 1945*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.
- Siegelau, Seth. "Art Without Space: A symposium moderated by Seth Siegelau with Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler and Joseph Kosuth." In *Lawrence Weiner*. London: Phaidon, 1998.
- Smith, Roberta. "Introduction." In *4 Artists and the Map: Image/Process/Data/Place*. Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, the University of Kansas, 1981.
- Smith, Terry. "Art and Art and Language." *Artforum* 12 (February 1974): 49-52.
- Smithson, Robert. "Art through the Camera's Eye." *Kunst & Museumjournaal* 5/6 (1994): 15-23.
- Solomon, Andrew. "Dot Dot Dot." *Artforum* 35 (February 1997): 66-110.
- Soutter, Lucy. "The Visual Idea: Photography in Conceptual Art." Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2001.
- Staniszewski, Mary Ann. "Conceptual Art." *Flash Art* 143 (November/December 1988): 88-97.
- , *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998.
- Stimson, Blake. "The Promise of Conceptual Art." In *Conceptual Art: a Critical Anthology*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999.
- Suga, Akira. "Why the Current Interest in Neo-Dada?" *Neo-Dada in Japan 1958-1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of "White House."* Oita City, Japan: Board of Education, 1998.
- Tadao, Ogura. "Direction of Realism Debate." *Bijutsu Techo* 240 (August 1964): 54-55.
- Takahashi, Seichiro. "Preface." In *Exhibition of Japanese Painting and Sculpture Sponsored by The Government of Japan*. Washington DC: National Gallery of Art, 1953.
- Takechi, Tetsuji. "Internationalization and Nationality." *Bijutsu Techo* 110 (June 1956): 114-15.
- Takiguchi, Shuzo. "Misc. view of exhibitions." *Yomiuri Newspaper*, 6 November, 1953.

- . "Words for Japanese Participating Works." In *The 3rd International Exhibition of Art*. Tokyo: Mainich Newspapers, 1955.
- . "Shinjin no jokyo ni tsuite [Trends among the newcomers]." *Bijutsu Techo* (January 1958): 42.
- Tani, Arata, "Transitional Period of Criticism: Analysis of *Bijutsu Hihyo*." *Mizue* 920 (November 1981): 62-67.
- Tatehata, Akira. "Fringe Modernism." In *Zones of Love: Contemporary Art from Japan*. Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1991.
- . "Kusama as Autonomous Surrealist." In *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, 1998.
- . "Neo-Dada Since Then." In *Neo-Dada in Japan 1958-1998: Arata Isozaki and the Artists of "White House."* Oita City, Japan: Oita City Board of Education, 1998.
- Tillim, Sidney. "In the Galleries: Yayoi Kusama." *Arts Magazine* 34 (October 1959): 56.
- . "In the Galleries: Yayoi Kusama." *Arts Magazine* 38 (February 1964): 26.
- Tipton, Elise K., and John Clark, ed. *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.
- Tomii, Reiko. "Concerning the Institution of Art: Conceptualism in Japan." In *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s*. New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999.
- Tono, Yoshiaki. "Yellow Race Group Exhibition." *Bijutsu Hihyo* 42 (June 1955): 61.
- . "Hirakareta sozoryoku tozasareta sozoryoku [Open Imagination, Closed Imagination]." *Bijutsu Hihyo* (January 1957).
- . "Neo-Dada et Anti-Art." In *Japon des Avant-Garde 1910-1970*. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1986.
- Tsai, Eugenie. *Robert Smithson Unearthed: Drawings, Collages, Writings*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Ueda, Makoto, ed. *The Mother of Dreams and Other Short Stories: Portrayals of Women in Modern Japanese Fiction*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1986.
- Uemura, Takachiyo. "Exhibition Review: 10th Yomiuri Independent." *Bijutsu Techo* 141 (May 1958): 88-90.

- Varnedoe, J. Kirk T. "Introduction." In *Modern Portraits: The Self & Others*. New York: Trustees of Columbia University, 1976.
- Vetrocq, Martha E. "Conceptualism: an expanded view." *Art in America* 87 (July 1999): 72-7.
- Walker, Janet A.. *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- Washburn, Gordon. "Japanese Influences on Contemporary Art: A Dissenting View." *Dialogue in Art: Japan and the West*, ed. Chisaburoh F. Yamada. Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International Ltd., 1976.
- Waspe, Roland. "On the Way: 1964 Paris – New York." In *On Kawara: 1964 Paris – New York Drawings*. Kunstverein St. Gallen: Kunstmuseum, 1997.
- Watkins, Jonathan. "Survey: Where 'I Don't Know' Is the Right Answer." In *On Kawara*. London: Phaidon, 2002.
- Weidemann, Henning. "What Is a Date Painting?" *On Kawara: June 9, 1991. from "Today" Series (1966-)*. Ostfildern, Germany: Cantz Verlag, 1994.
- Weil, Rex. "From Minimal to Conceptual Art: works form the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection." *Art News* 93 (November 1994): 161-62.
- Weintraub, Linda. "On Kawara: Self-documentation." In *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s-1990s*. Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, 1996.
- Westgeest, Helen. *Zen in the Fifties: Interaction in Art between East and West*. Zwolle, Netherlands: Waanders Publishers, 1996.
- White, Robert, and Gary M. Dault. "Word Art & Art Word." *Artscanada* (June 1968).
- Wilmes, Ulrich. "The Artist's Life." In *On Kawara: Horizontality/Verticality*. Munchen: Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, 2000.
- Winther-Tamaki, Bert. "Oil Painting in Postsurrender Japan: Reconstructing Subjectivity through Deformation of the Body." *Monumenta Nipponica* 58 (Autumn 2003): 347-96.
- Wray, Harry, and Hilary Conroy, ed. *Japan Examined: Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983.
- Yaguchi, Kunio. "The Venice Biennale and Japan." In *The Venice Biennale: 40 Years of Japanese Participation*. Tokyo: The Japan Foundation & the Mainichi Newspapers, 1995.

- Yamada, Satoshi. "On Kawara's Pencil Drawing Series – the content and the form of painting." In *On Kawara 1954, 1954, 1956, Naito Rei 1996*. Nagoya, Japan: Nagoya City Art Museum, 1996.
- . "Contemplation – On Kawara and Naito Rei." In *On Kawara 1954, 1954, 1956, Naito Rei 1996*, Nagoya, Japan: Nagoya City Art Museum, 1996.
- . "Realism in Postwar Japan 1945-1960." In *Realism in Postwar Japan 1945-1960*. Nagoya, Japan: Nagoya City Art Museum, 1998.
- Yanagi, Akira. "Western Art Magazines: Past and Present." *Bijutsu Techo* 136 (January 1958): 150-53.
- Yasuhiro, Yorozuki, "Point of Creation: Trends of Groups." *Mizue* 920 (January 1981): 55.
- Yiengpruksawan, Mimi Hall. "Japanese Art History 2001: The State and Stakes of Research." *The Art Bulletin* 83 (March 2001).
- Yokoyama, Tadashi. "At the Junction of Time and Space: On Kawara in the 1950s." *On Kawara 1952-1956 Tokyo*. Tokyo: Parco, 1991.
- Yorozuki, Yasuhiro. "Point of Creation: Trends of Groups." *Mizue* 920 (January 1981): 52-5
- Yoshiaki, Shimizu. "Japan in American Museums—But Which Japan?" *The Art Bulletin* 83 (March 2001): 123-134.
- Zelevansky, Lynn. "Driving Image: Yayoi Kusama in New York." In *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*. Los Angeles: LA County Museum of Art, 1998.
- Art in Japan Today*. Tokyo: Kinokuniya Book-Store Co. for Japan Foundation, 1974.
- Art in Japan Today II: 1970-1983*. Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1984.
- The Book is in the Mail: the postal system as used by Eleanor Antin, Beorge Brecht, Buster Cleveland, Commonpress, Peter Faecke, Robert Filliou, Henry Flynt, Gilbert & George, Guerilla Art Action Group, Ray Johnson, On Kawara, George Maciunas, Omnibus News, Meiko (Chieko) Shiomi, Daniel Spoerri, Roland Topor, Wolf Vostell, Robert Watts*. New York: Bound & Unbound, 1990.
- "Critical Reportage: Examining the Mass and the Tableau." *Bijutsu Techo* 142 (June 1958): 36.

Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing and Archiving in Art, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winsen. Munich: Prestel, 1998.

Guggenheim International Award 1960. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1960.

“In the Galleries: Kusama on Her Japanese Stroll through Central Park.” *Arts Magazine* 42 (September/October 1967): 58.

Japanese International Art Exhibition, Tokyo: Mainich Newspaper, 1952.

Tokyo Biennale '70. Tokyo: Tokyo Metropolitan Art Gallery (later The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tokyo), 1970.

Zones of Love: Contemporary Art from Japan. Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1991.