

Into the Unknown World – GUTAI: Differentiation and Integration
presented by

The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and the National Museum of Art, Osaka

October 22, 2022 – January 9, 2023

The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and the National Museum of Art, Osaka are pleased to present *Into the Unknown World – GUTAI: Differentiation and Integration*.

The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka, which opened in February 2022, and the National Museum of Art, Osaka are located right across the street from each other.

Opening in 2022, fifty years on from the dissolution of Gutai, this exhibition aims to construct a fresh understanding of Gutai based on the theme of differentiation and integration. Adopting an unusual format, the exhibition is presented simultaneously by two museums working in conjunction.



The Gutai Art Association (Gutai) was an artist collective that was formed in Ashiya (in Hyogo Prefecture, close to Osaka) in 1954. Painter Yoshihara Jiro (1905–72) was the central figure in the association. Through painting and a variety of other practices, the Gutai artists set out to express themselves freely without being confined to existing precedents. Today, the Gutai’s 18-year career, during which the group’s members carved their own creative path under Yoshihara’s guidance, is a subject of great interest both home and abroad, leading to a near-mythic status as one of the origins of postwar Japanese art.

In this exhibition, we have approached the evolution of GUTAI from two perspectives: differentiation and integration. The artists did their best to coalesce into a single group while striving to differentiate themselves from each other and avoiding imitation at all costs. This attitude has parallels with Yoshihara’s ideal state of art in which “the human spirit shake hands with each other while keeping their distance.

The two venues for this exhibition—the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and the National Museum of Art, Osaka—are both located on the island of Nakanoshima in central Osaka, making this the first major Gutai retrospective to take place where Gutai established the Gutai Pinacotheca, which was once home to the group’s headquarters. The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka focuses on the “differentiation” of Gutai, exploring the individual creativity of its artists, while the National Museum of Art, Osaka focuses on Gutai’s “integration,” following the undulations of the collective’s experimental course. This combination of differentiation and integration results in a new understanding of Gutai. Gutai included both male and female artists. This year, the 50th anniversary of Gutai’s dissolution, provides us with a perfect opportunity to reconsider the group’s efforts to plunge into an unknown world.

* The exhibition is presented at two venues: Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and the National Museum of Art, Osaka. Admission fees, opening hours, and closing days differ according to the venue.

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- Exhibition highlights

1. The first major Gutai retrospective to be held in Osaka’s Nakanoshima district, which was once home to the group’s headquarters, the Gutai Pinacotheca.
2. Held simultaneously at two venues, the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and the National Museum of Art, Osaka, with a total of 3,000 m² of exhibition space and approx. 170 artworks on display
3. A fresh understanding of Gutai based on the themes of differentiation and integration
4. Recreation of *International Sky Festival*

The symbol after the name of an artwork indicates where it is exhibited.

◆: Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka. ★: National Museum of Art, Osaka.

- Exhibition outline

> Differentiating Gutai

Differentiation—Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka

Gutai has always had a reputation for innovation and creativity. Yoshihara Jiro’s succinct exhortation to “Do what no-one has done before!” has come to symbolize that approach. The phrase is often quoted, but the true details of Gutai’s innovation and creativity are not generally known.

Taking up the theme of differentiation, the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka extracts some of the elements of the art produced by Gutai artists, and examines in detail how they apply in the individual practices.

At this venue, the aim is not simply to show that Gutai was diverse. Taking the diversity as given, it attempts to investigate the essence of Gutai as a group by bringing out the range of art that achieved acceptance, making the extent of that diversity as visible as possible.



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From upper left:

1. YOSHIHARA Jiro, *Work* ◆, 1962, oil on canvas, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.

2. TANAKA Atsuko, *Electric Dress* ◆, 1956/86, synthetic enamel paint on light bulbs, electric cords, control console, Takamatsu Art Museum.

Photograph: KATO Shigefumi. ©Kanayama Akira and Tanaka Atsuko Association.

3. MATSUTANI Takesada, *La Propagation 65-24* ◆, 1965, vinyl relief, oil, acrylic paint on canvas and plywood, The National Museum of Art, Osaka.

4. SHIRAGA Kazuo, *Tenbousei Ryoutouda (work inspired by Chinese novel Shui Hu Zhuan)* ◆, 1962, oil on canvas, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto.

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> Integrating Gutai

Integration—The National Museum of Art Osaka

Gutai was initially a group of painters. And although the visual art practices of its artists became increasingly varied as time went by, tracing each practice back to its roots demonstrates that it was the result of aiming to become free of the constraints imposed by the conventions of painting. The issue was how to break down and reconstruct the painterliness of art. The novelty of the results depended on how painting (or painterliness) was understood, and whether attempts were made to produce paintings or pictures after breaking down the painterliness. At the National Museum of Art, Osaka, the exhibition looks at the course taken by Gutai from a

macroscopic standpoint, attempting to identify trends in the various inquiries conducted by the Gutai artists. Gutai was not necessarily a monolithic entity, but the main aim here is to bring out the differences and attempt to integrate them into a unified whole.



From upper left:

5. YOSHIDA Minoru, *JUST CURVE '67 Cosmoplastic* ★, 1967, stainless steel, plexiglas, fluorescent lamp, sensor etc., Takamatsu Art Museum.

6. MURAKAMI Saburo, *Work* ★, 1957, mixed media on board, Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, ©MURAKAMI Tomohiko.

7. YOSHIHARA Jiro, *Work C* ★, 1971, acrylic on canvas, the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka.

8. YAMAZAKI Tsuruko, *Work* ★, 1960, oil, enamel on canvas, the National Museum of Art, Osaka.

- Exhibiting artists (in alphabetical order)

Horio Akiko, Horio Sadaharu, Imai Norio, Imanaka Kumiko, Kanayama Akira, Kanno Seiko, Kikunami Joji, Kinashi Aine, Kitani Shigeki, Maekawa Tsuyoshi, Masanobu Masatoshi, Matsuda Yutaka, Matsutani Takesada, Moriuchi Keiko, Motonaga Sadamasa, Mukai Shuji, Murakami Saburo, Naohara Michimasa, Nasaka Senkichiro, Nasaka Yuko, Ohara Kimiko, Onoda Minoru, Sakamoto Masaya, Shimamoto Shozo, Shiraga Fujiko, Shiraga Kazuo, Sumi Yasuo, Tai Satoshi, Takasaki Motonao, Tanaka Atsuko, Tanaka Ryuji, Tsubouchi Teruyuki, Uemae Chiyu, Ukita Yozo, Yamazaki Tsuruko, Yoshida Minoru, Yoshida Toshio, Yoshihara Jiro, Yoshihara Michio

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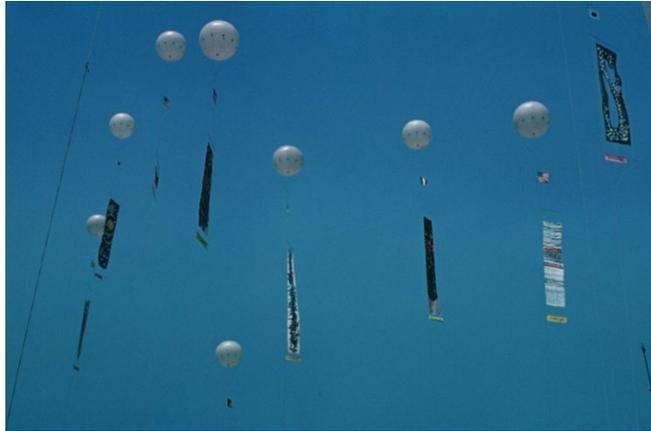
- Related events

Symposiums, lectures, and gallery talks are planned. Details will be announced on the museums' official

websites when they are finalized.

© *International Sky Festival*

The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka is recreating the midair Gutai exhibition *International Sky Festival* from November 15 to November 20, 2022.



A scene from *International Sky Festival* in 1960.

The venue for the original *International Sky Festival* exhibition was the rooftop of the Takashimaya Namba Department Store in Osaka. Enlarged versions of works by members of Gutai and artists from abroad were exhibited by being hung from ad balloons.

While the works exhibited this time are different from the ones shown in 1960, this event allows visitors to experience a similar midair exhibition. The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka plans to raise seven ad balloons from the museum's rooftop.

* In case of poor weather, schedule changes will be made, and announced on the museum website.

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The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and the National Museum of Art, Osaka

Exhibition outline

Exhibition title: *Into the Unknown World – GUTAI: Differentiation and Integration*, presented by the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and the National Museum of Art, Osaka

Dates: October 22, 2022 – January 9 (a national holiday), 2023

Opening hours: 10:00 – 17:00 (10:00 – 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays at the National Museum of Art, Osaka)

* Last entry is 30 minutes before closing.

Closed: Mondays (except January 2 when the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka will be open, and January 9 when both museums will be open)

* The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka will be closed on December 31 and January 1.

* The National Museum of Art, Osaka will be closed from December 28 to January 3.

Venues: 5F Galleries at the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and B2 Galleries at the National Museum of Art, Osaka

Organizers: The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka, the National Museum of Art, Osaka, The Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Broadcasting System, Inc.

Sponsorship: TAKENAKA CORPORATION

Cooperation: Daikin Foundation for Contemporary Arts

Grants: Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan in the fiscal/2022

The Kao Foundation for Arts and Sciences

TADAO ANDO CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Special cooperation: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art

Admission fee:

Venue/Ticket type	The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka	The National Museum of Art, Osaka
Double admission	2500 yen	
Adults	1400 yen (1200 yen)	1200 yen (1000 yen)
University students	1100 yen (900 yen)	700 yen (600 yen)

Admission is free for people under 18/high school students and younger. (Proof required.)

* Prices include tax. Prices in parentheses indicate per person prices for groups of 20 or more, and, in the case of the National Museum of Art, Osaka, night discounts (applicable after 17:00 on Fri. and Sat.).

* Admission for persons with mental or physical disabilities (along with one attendant) is half the same-day admission fee at the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka and free at the National Museum of Art, Osaka. (Disability certificate required.)

Inquiries:

The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka exhibition: +81-6-4301-7285 (Osaka City General Call Center)

The National Museum of Art, Osaka exhibition: +81-6-6447-4680

Official museum websites:

The Nakanoshima Museum of Art, Osaka: <https://nakka-art.jp/en/exhibition-post/gutai-2022-2/>

The National Museum of Art, Osaka:

https://www.nmao.go.jp/events/event/gutai_2022_nakanoshima/?lang=en

This exhibition is being held while taking precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The period of the exhibition, opening hours, and other details may change depending on the circumstances. Please check the museums' official websites for the latest information.

Direct press inquiries to:

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