

Ushio Shinohara (1932)

Ushio Shinohara is a painter, sculptor and performance artist whose works "from the early 60s to the present are almost uniformly raucous and bawdy" (Kopkos) and make little attempt to discriminate between ugly and pretty. He is affectionately known to the Japanese art community by the nickname "Gyu-chan".

Shinohara was born in Koji-machi, Tokyo in 1932, just when Japan was about to enter an age of great change. The son of a painter and a poet, Shinohara entered Tokyo Art University to study oil painting in 1952, the year the foreign occupation ended and the peace treaty finally went into effect. This was a time when Japan was rebuilding and remaking its society. As many of the youth were questioning the accepted cultural norms, many young artists were questioning the artistic norms. After leaving University in 1957, Shinohara organized the "Neo Dadaism Organizers" group, one of the most radical avant-garde collectives in postwar Japan. This was his reaction to the earlier avant-garde artists whose action paintings and radical departures had mellowed into more passive abstract imagery. Shinohara, sporting a Mohawk and striped to the waist, pounded on large canvases with paint-soaked boxing gloves creating what he called "Boxing Painting" in Tokyo in 1960 and then again this was revived in the 1990s. This activity was then turned into a performance. He also did 'action sculptures' or 'thunder sculptures', which were piles of junks that he slashed at ferociously. He participated in performance events that reflected post-war Japanese culture, which was much focused on American life. As a result, Ushio reflected the life of both countries in his artwork with subjects such as cowboys and geishas, and he lived cross-culturally, traveling often between the continents. Adhering to the motto "speed, beauty and rhythm", with a primordial chaos of colors and eruptive structures, he creates images and sculptures that are full of energy, imagination and humor. His work is most well known for its rowdy and vulgar approach to subjects as well as the use of riotous, bold colors.

Another genre of his was sculptures of motorcycles and riders and as a result of a fellowship, he got to travel in 1969 to America where he remained. "Motorcycles became his expression of America." However, his riders often were geishas. He created the images out of found objects and made them garish, exaggerated and humorous. He is still making these motorcycle sculptures today. "Van Gogh Scooter" is based on Shinohara's imagination of what he thought Van Gogh might have been like if he had been taken to Bermuda, a place where Shinohara feels greatly inspired. In many of Shinohara's paintings and sculptures the themes and materials are everyday objects, such as discarded trash, motorcycle parts, mass media-related objects and other tokens of modern society. All of this work radiates movement and emotion of ferocious intensity. In 1963, Shinohara created the series "Imitation Art," in which he "imitated" the Western Neo-Dada and Pop Art masterpieces, such as Jasper Johns' Three Flags and Robert Rauschenberg's Coca-Cola Plan, as well as earlier innovators such as Van Gogh. As reviewed in New York Art.com, this "imitation Art series gives evidence to Shinohara's highly rational, critical mind behind his seemingly idiosyncratic conduct and work." ... "...by copying foreign

artworks in a startling way, Shinohara suggested that those Japanese artists who had been following in the wake of artistic movements abroad had been simply pretending to be original. What they did in fact was 'adapt.'" During a 1964 Rauschenberg performance in Japan, Shinohara leaped on stage firing questions at the artist. Although Rauschenberg did not verbally respond (but pasted the written translations on his tableau and covered them with paint), he later reportedly held Shinohara's "Coca-Cola Plan" in his hands and excitedly shouted "My son, My son!"

In 1990, the creative work of Ushio Shinohara was the subject of a traveling exhibition sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art in Kamakura, and in 2005, an exhibition, "Shinohara Ushio: Boxing Paintings and Motorcycle Sculptures", was at the same museum from September 17 to November 6. Bilingual catalogues accompanied the shows.

Shinohara continues to be revered as one of Japan's great avant-garde artists where his work is highly sought after. He is currently being exhibited in the Toyota Municipal Museum in Aichi, Japan. In 2006 Ethan Cohen Fine Arts hosted "Action Painting Battle!" which was a competition of performance painting held in the middle of Jay Street in TriBeCa. In this painting spectacle, Shinohara's famous "Boxing Painting" was challenged by young action painter Ryoga Katsuma.

Today, when one observes the finished result of Shinohara's efforts, the artist's frenetic and colorful paintings, drawings and sculptures radiate with the great energy he exerts when creating. They scream color, movement, joy, wonder and power.

As Julia Cassim observed in her 1993 Art in America review of Shinohara's retrospective show in Tsukashin Hall – Amagasaki, Japan, "His kaleidoscopic paintings of pneumatic, rubber-nippled nudes, bikers and Coney Island's garish glories are painted in the acid reds, greens and pinks common to Asian street fairs from Tokyo to Bombay. They burst at the seams with detail. Seemingly slapdash and rapidly painted, they are, in fact, as carefully composed as any more formal work."

"Draw a line on the pure white virgin paper. Don't stop, don't think. Next, with a spirited howl of 'Yeah, yeah, Oh!' draw circles, draw straight lines and don't think!" -Ushio Shinohara.

Public Collections

The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The National Museum of Art, Osaka
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
Hara Museum of Contemporary Art

The Museum of Modern Art, Hyogo
The Museum of Modern Art, Tokushima
The Museum of Modern Art, Toyama
The Museum of Modern Art, Shiga
Kawaguchi Museum of Modern Art
Sazon Museum of Modern Art

Meguro Museum of Art
Yokohama Museum of Art
Setagaya Art Museum
Fukuoka Art Museum
The Miyagi Art Museum
The Museum of Art, Kochi
Itabashi Art Museum, Tokyo
Ohara Museum of Art

Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art
Chiba City Museum of Art
Iwaki City Museum of Art
The Niigata Bandaijima Art Museum
Niigata City Art Museum
Oita City Art Museum
Takamatsu City Museum of Art
Saku Municipal Museum of Modern Art (Nagano)
Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts

Kouro dai Park (Kitakyushu City)
Fare Tachikawa (Tokyo)
Aomori Museum of Art Preparation Room
Kirishima Open Air Museum (Kagoshima)

Selected Exhibitions

2007

Gyu and Chu : Ushio Shinohara and Enoki tadashi , Toyota Municipal Museum of Art , Aichi (solo)

2006

Ushio Shinohara Reckless Drivers f Meeting, NANZUKA UNDERGROUND, Tokyo (solo)

2005

Exhibition of SHINOHARA Ushio, Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama (solo)
Shuzo Takiguchi-Dream Driftages-Setagaya Art Museum

2004

'05 the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
Position of Dessin, Gallery Yamaguchi
Period of Copy from Duchamp to Warhol, Morimura, the Museum of Modern Art, Shiga
Marcel Duchamp and 20th century Art, the National Museum of Art, Osaka
'05 Yokohama Museum of Art
Traces-Body and Thought in Postwar Art, the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto
The State University of New York at Potsdam, Performance

2003

'Power of Art changes the world' BEAMS JAPAN B GALLERY, Tokyo (solo)
Ise Cultural Foundation, New York (solo)

2002

Furusato Koryu Kenmin Center Ortensia, Aomori 'Tetsumi Kudo' exhibition
Musashino Art University, Tokyo, Performance
Pop! Pop!! Pop!!!, the Museum of Modern Art, Ibaraki
Nagaoka Modern Art Awards Retrospection 1964-1968, the Museum of Modern Art, Niigata
20th Century. Art Recognized a False Image, Hiratsuka Museum of Art, Kanagawa

2001

Shuzo Takiguchi—Dream Driftages—Toyama Kenminkaikan Art Museum, Toyama
Fuchu Art Museum, Tokyo 'Ushio Shinohara the avant-garde artist who fights with a piranha'
Fuchu Art Museum Shimin Gallery (solo)

2000

Lyon Modern Art Museum, 'Art Creates'
Busan Metropolitan Art Museum, 'Changes of Paper'
PROCESS/REPROCESS Japan and the West, Leslie Tonkonow, New York
7 Banzais Little Monsters of Taro Okamoto, Taro Okamoto Museum of Art
'FLOWER', Gallery Yamagushi
Art Creates, Lyon Modern Art Museum
Changes of Paper, Busan Metropolitan Art Museum

1999

Out of Action 1949-1979, Museum of Contemporary Art, CA(MOCA), Austria Museum of Modern Art (MAK), Vienna, Barcelona Modern Art Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo

1998

Art Praza, Oita, 'Neo-Dada Japan 1958-1998'
Austria Museum of Modern Art (MAK), Vienna, 'Out of Action 1949-1979'
Neo-Dada Japan 1958-1998, Art Praza, Oita
Chukyo University Art Gallery C ESquare, Aichi (solo)

1997

Summer in Japan 1960-1964, Art Tower Mito, Ibaraki
LET'S GO Ukiyoe, Mitaka City Art Gallery, Tokyo

1995

95 Neo-Dada-Phase, Conpal Hall, Oita
Toyama Shimin Praza EArt Gallery, Toyama (solo)

1994

Avant-Garde of Japanese Postwar, Yokohama Museum of Art, Soho Guggenheim Museum
The 2nd International Steel Symposium Kita-Kyushu '93, Fukuoka

1993

Visions of Desire, Gallery Yamaguchi/ Noriko Shinohara and a couple, New York
Photo Exhibition of Neo-Dada, Fukuoka Art Museum
MOMA contemporary, Fukuoka (solo)

1992

Exhibition of SHINOHARA Ushio, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokushima Modern Art Museum,
Tsukashin Hall, Hara Museum Arc

1991

Sapporo Marui Creo Gallery/ Sano Gallery, Kagawa/ Gallery Yamaguchi SOKO (solo)
Western Paintings in Showa---Postwar Figures, Himeji City Museum of Art, Hyogo
Object/Poem-from Thinking Objects to GOMI EART, Itabashi Art Museum, Tokyo
10th Anniversary Special Exhibition Paintings in Showa Part 3 Postwar Art-its rebirth and development, the Miyagi Art
Museum
5 Perspectives, Gallery Collier, New York
Art and Life Anti-ArtEPan-Art Exhibition, the National Museum of Art, Osaka
The National Museum of Art, Osaka, 'Art and Life Anti-Art Pan-Art Exhibition'

1990

Prefectural Museum of Art
Streams of Modern Art-Japan, the Museum of Modern Art, Toyama
Figure of Human, Figure of Beauty-Bodily Art in Modern Art, Fukushima

1989

Phantom Yamamura Collections, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art
Techno-Metaphysics: 5 Japanese Artists, Grace Borgenicht Gallery, New York

1988

Art Kite Exhibition, the Miyagi Art Museum (exhibition tours)
'Neo-Fauvism Manifest' the Seibu Department Store, Shibuya Art Gallery, Tokyo (solo)
Herbert Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles (solo)

1986

Modern Art in Asia, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Korea

1985

Japanese Contemporary Art Australia Traveling Show CONTINUUMf 85, Australia Modern Art Center
Restructure: Japanese Avant-Garde 1945-1965, Modern Art Oxford, UK
Studio Parco, Space 5/ Gallery NAF, Aichi (solo)

1984

Kawasaki IBM Gallery, Kanagawa (solo)
20 years of Modern Paintings, the Museum of Modern Art, Gunma

1983

1960-Starting Point to Versatility, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum
Emba Culture Hall, Tokyo/ Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts (solo)

1982

New York Foundation Gallery (solo)
New York Japan, House Gallery (solo)
Modern Realism, the Museum of Modern Art, Saitama
Takiguchi Shuzo and Postwar Art, the Museum of Modern Art, Toyama

1981

Gallery Yamaguchi (83, 84, 87, 88, 90, 91, 95, 98, 01, 02 PART I, II, II, 05)
Space 31/ Gallery Housun/ Gallery Haku, Osaka (solo)

1980

The History of Modern Sculpture----Footmarks of Postwar Sculpture by 41 artists Kanagawa Prefectural Gallery

1979

Japan Today, World Trade Center, New York

1978

New York Chino Gallery/ Kokubunji Gallery/ Gallery Kawamatsu (solo)
Naika Gallery (64, 65), Tokyo (solo)

1977

Gallery U (80), Nagoya (solo)

1976

Sakura Gallery, Nagoya (solo)

1975

New York Azuma Gallery/ Nishimura Gallery (77), Tokyo (solo)

1972

Gallery Décor, Tokyo (solo)

1968

Publication; Autobiography 'Zenei no Michi (Road to Avant-garde)'

1967

The 9th Japan International Art, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

1966

New Generations of Modern Art, the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
Onna no Matsuri (Woman's Festival), Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo (solo)

1965

Tsubaki Kindai Gallery (66), Tokyo (solo)

1963

Akiyama Gallery, Tokyo (solo)
The 7th Shell Art Awards (1964), Shirakiya Gallery, Tokyo

1960

The 1st Neo-Dadaism Organizers Exhibition, Ginza Gallery, Tokyo

1960

The 2nd Neo-Dada Exhibition, Yoshimura Masunobu Atelier, Tokyo

1958

Muramatsu Gallery (62, 67), Tokyo (solo)

1955

The 7th Yomiuri Japan Independent Exhibition (57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63), Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

Some Sources include:

Janet Koplos, "Report From Japan: Clamor and Quiet", *Art in America*, March 2006, pp. 59-61

Artist Hot News Museum Gallery

<http://www.new-york-art.com/e/Ushio-Shinohara.htm>

<http://www.ecfa.com/site/press.php?release=58>

http://open-air-museum.org/en/art/collection/arthall/ushio_shinohara.php