

## On Akira Kanayama's Red Circle Painting

Tomoaki Kitagawa

In this paper, I have endeavored to bring to light the special qualities of expression found in the work of Akira Kanayama (a member of Gutai, the important post-war Japanese avant-garde art group), by engaging in a study of the abstract painting *Mudai (Untitled)*, which depicts a red circle on a square canvas.

*Untitled* is distinctive for its directly symmetrical composition, the color contrasts that arise from its use of primary colors, and the regularity left by the strokes of the brush on the painted surface. For the purposes of this paper, I have inferred from this last aspect, the regularity of the brushstrokes on the painted surface, that Kanayama produced *Untitled* using tools.

In the main discussion, after indicating aspects of Kanayama's brush style and color composition that differ from the work of Jirō Yoshihara and Atsuko Tanaka, I comment on the presence in Kanayama's work of strong influences from the "painter of lines", Paul Klee. One concrete example of this is the coexistence of layers in Kanayama's work, which brings to mind Klee's polyphonic paintings; here one finds both the level of form-creation expression, and the level of images depicting the heavens and the universe.

Based on the above points, I interpret the strokes left by the brush in *Untitled* as tracks of "lines" that have been severed from Kanayama's body. On the other hand, I also treat *Untitled* as a diagram of the creation of the universe. While *Untitled* is not the kind of work that arouses visual delight at first glance, it is certainly fair to speak of this piece as indicative of one of the extremities that Kanayama worked with, in the sense that he was attempting to symbolize the origins of the world exhaustively, without yielding to mere sensory aspects.

## **About "Museum Learning"**

### **A Coordinated Program between Toyota Municipal Museum of Art and Public Schools (Fiscal Years 1996 - 2008)**

Masatoshi Tsuzuku

Ever since opening its doors in November 1995, Toyota Municipal Museum of Art has been building on-site partnerships with schools, and making continual efforts to promote art appreciation education. Whether through offering support for art appreciation-themed demonstration lessons, providing diverse art-education training sessions for teaching staff at city elementary and middle schools, or hosting introductory art museum workshops for newly appointed instructors, the Museum's collaborative work with teachers in local schools continues to expand year after year.

Concurrently, we have been engaged in a coordinated program with schools to connect elementary and middle school students with the Museum. In tandem with the Museum's opening, the City of Toyota initiated a new program called "Museum Learning". In the Museum Learning program, each year an entire grade of students from each of the elementary and middle schools in the city is invited to the Museum, and opportunities are provided for the schoolchildren to learn firsthand about the Museum as a public facility and come into direct contact with outstanding examples of art through guided appreciation of exhibited works. Begun at the request of the Toyota City Board of Education, and realized on the basis of a cooperative framework developed between the Museum and the schools, Museum Learning was an experimental program that anticipated the new government curriculum guidelines announced in fiscal 1998, which would clearly specify a more active utilization of art museums. The launch of this program was a groundbreaking event in the practice of art appreciation education, with few parallels anywhere else in Japan.

Tracing the history of "Museum Learning" from its beginnings in fiscal 1996 up to the stage it had reached in fiscal 2008, when its learning assistance curriculum was fully organized and on track as an ongoing program, this paper gives an outline of its overall development, and discusses both its significance and the challenges that lie ahead.

## A Discussion between Ryudai Takano and Tadasu Yamamoto

Masao Kitatani

This discussion event featuring Ryudai Takano and Tadasu Yamamoto was held on February 25, 2012, as a related program of the exhibition "Tadasu Yamamoto Light, Water, Electricity" (January 7 to April 8, 2012).

The discussion between these two photographers began with statements of clarification of each other's basic stances with regard to photography. Takano is documenting in his work the complex circumstances of gender in contemporary society, and for the most part, photographs people. Yamamoto, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with water as the target of his lens, and despite his setting up of frames with images that are at first glance photogenic, he is in fact in pursuit of a photographic essence. As such, on undertaking a general evaluation of the work of these two photographers, one might expect to find a basic difference of orientation. However, as Takano himself pointed out, Yamamoto's statement that "You can only shoot what's in front of the lens" echoes his own way of thinking, and is a point of commonality. With this as a starting point, their discussion progressed through a wide range of perspectives on matters such as photography-based scientific worldviews, the central role of light in photography, and the stance of the photographer when confronted with the target (the object to be photographed).

One focal point that developed out of this conversation between Takano and Yamamoto was the word "straight". Through their use of its various nuances, whether referring to the photographer's direct confronting of the object to be photographed, for instance, or the carrying out of photography sessions without excessive direction, or the pressing of the shutter button without falling into the trap of overemphasized technique, this "straight", with its encapsulating of both artists' viewpoints on photography, served as a constant thread of connection to Yamamoto's opening statement and became the leitmotif of the entire discussion.