

Blinky Palermo's "white on white"(2): On the return of white cloth picture in 1970

Toshiharu Suzuki

Post-war German artist Blinky Palermo (1943–1977) produced his *Stoffbilder*, or “cloth pictures,” between the late 1960s and early 1970s. The preceding essay, “Blinky Palermo’s ‘White on White’ (1): The White Fabric Paintings and Malevich,” considers the example of an all-white picture that appeared in 1967, the earliest stage of this period, analyzing the use of fabric as a material by contemporary artists (including those close to Palermo) and the use of the color white as a postwar-era symbol for restarting from a clean slate. Each topic is discussed in relation to discourses surrounding art history and criticism of the time, including the reevaluation of abstract painter Kazimir Malevich, who was involved in the early avant-garde movement.

The *Stoffbilder* were compositions made from multiple store-bought fabrics in an array of colors. What started out as a mundane material was employed to mime the abstract expressions and minimalist paintings of the time, while quietly blurring the lines between image, painting, and object; this distinctive series is regarded as Palermo’s representative work. Palermo ultimately realized some 60 fabric paintings between 1967 and 1973, with an all-white picture emerging once again in 1970 (now in the collection of the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art). It is worth assuming that the reappearance of the white monochrome painting, clearly an exception to the *Stoffbilder* series’ characteristic use of color, was a result of some deliberate intention. The essay focuses on key aspects of Palermo’s approach to his creative process by comparing the development of his fabric paintings with the murals created around the same time, and by delineating how the all-white *Stoffbilder* from 1970 came at a major turning point in the artist’s career.

The Fiction of “Japaneseness”: Ho Tzu Nyen’s *Hotel Aporia*

Yoko Nose

Singaporean artist Ho Tzu Nyen premiered his installation *Hotel Aporia* in the city of Toyota, one of the sites of Aichi Triennale 2019. Its venue, Kirakutei, is a direct reflection of the historical and economic development of the area, bustling with sericulture-industry workers before, marine officers during, and auto industry personnel after the war. Taking this hotel as its stage, Ho’s work resurrects the wartime atmosphere by featuring a number of related figures as its main characters: the Kyoto School philosophers; the Kusanagi kamikaze unit, who spent their last night at Kirakutei before leaving Toyota to embark on a suicide mission; and those dispatched to the South Seas as members of the propaganda corps including film director Yasujiro Ozu and cartoonist Ryuichi Yokoyama. Through their lives and fates, the work reveals the diverse, complex, and often contradictory ideological and historical backdrops of a turbulent era when militarism was inextricably linked with anti-modernism and the promise of liberation.

Founded on a complex interweaving of time and space across Asia, Ho’s work abounds with representations of Asia. The Kyoto School thinkers and Yasujiro Ozu are celebrated across the globe as symbols of postwar Japanese culture. Summoning these cultural figures in *Hotel Aporia* was an intentional choice: Ho throws into relief how the fiction of Japaneseness (or Asianness) plays out within a system in which the West and the East mutually desire each other. He calls on the audience to consider the notion of non-Western modernism, in the past and in the present—its implications, and whether it really could have been possible following the modern age, a time when the West and East became intrinsically tied.