

## The Scope of "Poor": Reconsidering Arte Povera

Tadashi Kanai

Arte Povera is a movement initiated by an exhibition curated by the critic Germano Celant in Geneva in 1967. Highly respected today, it was among tendencies that critiqued formalism and embraced counterculture at the time. The scholarship on Arte Povera has recently made dramatic progress, with retrospective exhibitions organized worldwide, including those at Tate Modern (2001) and Walker Art Center (2001-02). Its overall achievement has been reevaluated and its relevance today--its affinity and commonality with today's art--has been reinstated. The deployment of such non-art (non-paint) materials as rugs, newspaper, lumber, and lead, as well as the evocative (or contradictory) power of the word "poor," are favorably received by today's critics and artists alike, who now shun the once-current keywords of "avant-garde," "abstraction," "expression," and "concept."

However, what was this art that claimed to be poor? Granted, "poor" means the rejection of monetary concern; still, I suspect the term may not even engage the idea of "material" per se. In this text, I examine Arte Povera's group exhibitions and the related publications to ascertain the following two aspects. First, Celant himself defined "Arte Ricca" (Rich Art) in 1967, which can be construed as the counter concept of "Arte Povera" (Poor Art). Second, the roster of Arte Povera artists as we know it today was not established until the 1980s (that is, the period when the museum began the collection and research of Arte Povera in earnest). In other words, toward 1970, "Arte Povera" functioned as an exhibition title or a kind of slogan.

Forty years after the first exhibition, Arte Povera is increasingly referenced as a phase of 20th-century art history. However, in order not to reduce it to an ism that came and went, we must keep in mind the above two points.

(Translated by Reiko Tomii)

## Collection Research: Isamu Wakabayashi's *One Hundred Envious View*

Masao Kitatani

Among the collections of Toyota Municipal Museum of Art is *One Hundred Envious View*, a set of 101 drawings by the sculptor Isamu Wakabayashi. These drawings seem to reveal elements Wakabayashi considers important in his sculpture making--such as depth, layering, thickness, and space itself. However, it is not easy to decipher his thought in them. As a preparatory step to understand this work, this essay examines the making of the series.

From the dates inscribed on the back of these drawings, it can be inferred that they were created over the period of a year and a few months in 1971 and 1972. They are more or less identical in size, averaging 38 x 53 cm. Therefore, it can be inferred that *One Hundred Envious View* was created with a certain intention. However, there is a discrepancy between the number in its title (100) and the actual number of drawings (101). In reference to other works by Wakabayashi, which also include the number 100 in their titles, I propose that 100 signifies both the "large amount or number that cannot be empirically comprehended" and the "amount or number to be reached through continuous work."

I next examined three sets of numbers inscribed on the back of each drawing, which seem to denote the dates of production and some sort of serialized numbers. It is considered that the latter numbers were the serial number of this series, the numbers once used in the making of the series, and/or the catalog numbers used for his 1973 solo exhibition. One factor that made him give some sort of serial number to these drawings was his exchange with the museum director who organized this solo exhibition, which made him aware of the viewer's gaze at his drawings. Additionally, these numbers indicate that he made certain selections from many drawings he made during this period to compile *One Hundred Envious View*.

(Translated by Reiko Tomii)

## Modernist and Japanese Elements in Taniguchi Architecture

Yoko Nose

The architect Yoshio Taniguchi began his career with his design of Shiseido Art House in 1978. Since then, he has designed a number of museum buildings, including Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art (1991), Toyota Municipal Museum of Art (1995), and the Gallery of Horyuji Treasures at Tokyo National Museum (1999). His museum projects, primarily within Japan, came to be known worldwide in 1998, when he won the international invitational competition for the new Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA).

Before Taniguchi, MoMA's buildings and its expansion at the current location had been designed by an independent architect and two firms:] Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone, Philip Johnson, and Cesar Pelli & Associates. This history in and of itself is a history of modernist architecture. MoMA was the first museum to create a department of architecture. Philip Johnson, who headed the department and later undertook the 1951 expansion, curated the exhibition *The International Style: Architecture since 1922*, with Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., in 1932. This exhibition launched the term "international style," signifying functional architecture practiced in 1920s Europe. This American-made theory of architecture would be influential for many years afterward.

Taniguchi's architecture is marked by modernism, nurtured by MoMA, which he has further refined. His museums are in essence "white cubes," and it is MoMA that formulated the notion of installing modern art in an unadorned white space. Entering the 21st century, MoMA embraces a "new modernism."

By incorporating the elements of Japanese gardens and architecture, Taniguchi successfully imbued the idioms of modernist architecture, often faulted for its lifeless quality, with a sense of refined and delicate aesthetics. In the early years of the Showa period (1926-1989), partly thanks to the praise by Bruno Taut, Japanese architecture with its regularity and absence of decoration was touted as a pioneer of modernist architecture. Some eighty years since then, it is time to reexamine the melding of modernist and Japanese elements in Taniguchi's designs.

(Translated by Reiko Tomii)