

Heihachiro Fukuda: Life Force's Color and Form

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The painter Heihachiro Fukuda (1892-1974) is well known for his role as an innovator in the realm of nihonga (traditional Japanese style painting) as it shifted from the modern era to today, and his work has received great acclaim for its richly decorative and symbolic style.

Consequently, most studies of Heihachiro have tended to be concerned with "modernist" and "nihonga modernist" viewpoints and contexts. Certainly, there is nothing wrong about that in itself. Heihachiro and modernism-oriented pictorial composition are indeed inextricably linked.

I believe this is a superficial, technical aspect, however; the essential themes and awareness Heihachiro was trying to express lie elsewhere. In effect, what he was undertaking was nothing less than the act of attempting to grab hold of the "life force" of nature that surrounds humans, and of which humans are no more than a single part, and of endeavoring, as an artist, to substitute that life force with "color" and "form" so as to give it expression.

In this short essay, I will explore Heihachiro's aims in producing work and attempt to get closer to his essence through verifying the processes he followed, focusing on the varying approaches he took for each of his painting subjects, such as "plants"; "living creatures (fish)"; "living creatures (birds)"; "still lifes" and "water".

The attempt to express this life force using color and form has been a vital, central theme of Japanese painting, and of Japanese art in general, since ancient times. I would like to call further attention to how Heihachiro went beyond modernism and those "traditional themes" that might be thought of as their antithesis, and came to unify them.

Behind the Vanishing in Yutaka Matsuzawa's "Conceptual Art"

Yoko Nose

Yutaka Matsuzawa was born on February 2, 1922 at 2 o'clock in the morning, at Shimosuwa-cho in the Suwa district of Nagano Prefecture, and late on the night of June 1, 1964, he heard the revelatory words "Get rid of objects," and thus began his word-based art. Subsequent to this now-legendary event, Matsuzawa came to be regarded as a founder of conceptual art. Yet Matsuzawa's works differed greatly from the conceptual art produced by his contemporaries in Europe and America, which had strongly intellectual and system-criticizing elements. In this article, rather than positing Matsuzawa himself as the originator of conceptual art, my intention has been to look at his work in light of the activities of his contemporaries, both in Japan and internationally, while confirming their various intents and differences, and to consider in the context of the social conditions of his time the significance of the "vanishing" that is one of Matsuzawa's basic concepts.

In this article, I have focused particularly on the elements of "core," "quantum physics" and "Eastern thought" that are important aspects of Matsuzawa's conceptual art, discussed the criticism of materialism present in that vanishing, and further, explored his orientation of going beyond the autonomy and individualism of art in order to fuse the individual within a greater universality.

Translation I Jean Fautrier's Six Texts

The materials presented here, translated into Japanese from French, are six pieces of writing made public in magazines and other printed media by the leading twentieth-century French painter Jean Fautrier (1898-1964), and include interviews and original pieces by the artist himself.

Though Fautrier was discussed during his lifetime by such celebrated polemicists as André Malraux, Francis Ponge and Jean Paulhan, surprisingly little remains of the painter's own words. It has been acknowledged that Fautrier himself had little taste for participating actively in arguments on art. In any case, the fact that the painter himself made few statements certainly does not diminish the importance of those statements. The testimony of this painter, who made his own singular way between figuration and abstraction without ever losing connection with reality, is of great interest when considered in the context of painting today. Here is the voice of an idiosyncratic, reticent painter who has been favorably (at times, even enthusiastically) received since the 1950s even in Japan, as a pioneer of Informel.