

Lecture Series “Who Was Jean Fautrier?”

As part of the “Jean Fautrier” exhibition held during the summer of 2014 (July 20 – September 15), Toyota Municipal Museum of Art hosted a three-part lecture series entitled “Who Was Jean Fautrier?.” The city of Toyota welcomed the following three scholars for the series: novelist and French literature specialist Toshiyuki Horie (1964 –), art historian and critic Michio Hayashi (1959 –) and comparative literature scholar Tohru Haga (1931 –). The following are summaries of their lectures.

Mr. Horie, in his lecture entitled “Concerning Fautrier: Standing in the *Entre-monde*,” shed light on Fautrier through the eyes of one of the artist’s closest friends, the poet and editor Jean Paulhan, and discussed how both men had experienced a terrible war, and lived in adverse conditions in which meanings and signs and thoughts and words were starting to become fragmented. In addition, Mr. Horie spoke of the earnestness the two men shared with regard to confronting the space between the conventional and the non-conventional, which both sought when making paintings or uttering words.

Mr. Hayashi’s lecture, “The Anxiety of Stratified Painting—On Jean Fautrier,” discussed the relationship between Fautrier’s pre-war works and the Hostage series while critically reassessing the latter’s connection to the Informel aesthetics. The physical as well as semantic strata of Fautrier’s paintings were analyzed from various thematics such as the horizontal orientation of his paintings, multi-layered references to art historical memories, libidinal investments, and anti-bourgeois or anti-modernist aspects. Mr. Hayashi also discussed Fautrier’s “original multiples (originaux multiples),” and urged for a re-evaluation of the existing views on Fautrier by way of comparison with such artists as On Kawara and Andy Warhol who also treated the value of the “original” as suspect.

For the third and final lecture, we requested Mr. Haga to speak on Fautrier’s work and on the significance of Informel’s emergence in the latter half of the twentieth century, drawing from his viewpoint as a “witness” who was present in late-1950s Paris during the rise of Informel, and who moreover came into close contact with Fautrier in 1959, when he acted as the artist’s interpreter during his visit to Japan. Entitled “Fautrier – Informel and Its Intellectual Environment,” this lecture began with Mr. Haga’s colorful recollections of actual experiences, and then confirmed once more the extent to which the regional spreading of Informel in the 1950s that linked Europe, North America and Japan, and its temporal disconnection, were actively and intensely craved.