



# Afterall

## Shigeo Anzai and the 10th Tokyo Biennale

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Shigeo Anzai, Richard Serra, The 10th Tokyo Biennale '70 'Between Man and Matter', Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1970, baryta-coated silver print. Courtesy the artist and White Rainbow, London

Japanese photographer Shigeo Anzai has spent his career documenting artists and their work in Japan and internationally for over four decades. Many of these artworks now exist only through reconstruction or in Anzai's images. A recent exhibition curated by Edward Ball at the White Rainbow gallery in London presented a wide selection of photographs from Anzai's archive, providing an exhaustive record of the Japanese avant-garde scene of the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> Exploring the photographer's role as a witness, the exhibition presented rare images taken by Anzai while working as an artist assistant at the 10th Tokyo Biennale, a crucial exhibition that set Japanese conceptualism within a wider international context.

Titled 'Between Man and Matter', the 10th Tokyo Biennale opened in May 1970 at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, and subsequently travelled to Kyoto, Nagoya and Fukuoka.<sup>2</sup> The art critic Yusuke Nakahara, who was appointed General Commissioner for the exhibition, aimed to distinguish it from both the Venice and São Paulo biennial models by abolishing prizes and national representations.<sup>3</sup> In order to represent the increasing diversity of artistic approaches that had developed beyond the traditional categories of painting and sculpture in the 1960s, Nakahara selected forty artists then working in Japan, Europe and North America.<sup>4</sup> Associated with post-Minimalism, Arte Povera, Conceptualism and Mono-ha, these artists reflected Nakahara's personal understanding of a renewed notion of art. He affirmed that, since artworks were undergoing a radical change, the viewer's relation to those works was also changing: they existed in a mutual relationship 'between man and matter', space and time.<sup>5</sup>

The exhibition represented the culmination of two decades of experimentation in Japan, which had seen the rise of Gutai, anti-Art, non-Art and Mono-ha, and attempted to show a continuity between these practices and art movements developed in the West, underscoring shared interests in exploring the boundaries between art and life, acting and being. Creative exchanges between Japanese and North American and European artists had regularly occurred since the 1950s, and in the 1960s Japanese institutions began to forge links with the art world abroad, particularly with US artists and museums.<sup>6</sup> The 10th Tokyo Biennale furthered such international ambition by affording many foreign artists the opportunity to work in situ.<sup>7</sup> Nearly half of the artists included in the project had participated the year before in 'When Attitudes Become Form (Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information)' at the Kunsthalle Bern and/or in 'Op Losse Schroeven (Situations and Cryptostructures)' at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam<sup>8</sup> – two shows that Nakahara refers to as direct influences in the exhibition catalogue, together with 'Anti-Illusion: Procedures / Materials' (1969) at the Whitney Museum in New York.<sup>9</sup> Nakahara also travelled elsewhere in Europe and, notably for the time, included artists from Poland and former Czechoslovakia.

In 1970 Anzai had yet to travel overseas,<sup>10</sup> and had just recently started to take photographs, supposedly taking on board a suggestion from Japanese artist and theorist Lee Ufan.<sup>11</sup> The 10th Tokyo Biennale marked a breakthrough in his career, which would later take him to photograph the 42nd Venice Biennale (1986) and documenta 8 and IX (1987 and 1992) in Kassel. Having been asked to assist Carl Andre, Daniel Buren and Richard Serra during the installation of the biennial, he began to photograph these and other artists in the process of producing site-specific artworks. Working at a time when artists were increasingly adopting time-based and process-led approaches, Anzai considered photography as a means to document ephemeral and site-specific interventions, capturing the immediacy of the moment. His photographs are a precious record of seminal moments in Japanese art. On their own, however, the images of the 10th Tokyo Biennale on view at White Rainbow offer a biased view of the exhibition in as much as they focus on work produced by international artists, with the important exception of Jirō Takamatsu.

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Shigeo Anzai, Jirō Takamatsu, *The 10th Tokyo Biennale '70 'Between Man and Matter'*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1970, baryta-coated silver print. Courtesy the artist and White Rainbow, London

The exhibition's title, 'Between Man and Matter', can be interpreted as a tacit acknowledgement of the importance of Gutai and Mono-ha, two groups of artists – although loosely affiliated in the case of the latter – formed in Japan, who shared an interest in the relationship amongst man, object and environment. In the manifesto of the Gutai Art Association (1956), Jirō Yoshihara asserts that man and matter exist in balance with each other and the role of Gutai artists is not to shape matter, but rather to bring it to life.<sup>12</sup> In his essay for the catalogue of the 10th Tokyo Biennale, Nakahara insists upon this idea by stating that 'man and matter are joined together inseparably, with mutual influence and control.'<sup>13</sup>

Mono-ha, literally 'the school of things', is a term used to describe the practice of a

group of artists working in Japan in the late 1960s and early 70s who mainly used natural raw materials such as charcoal, stones, wood and soil, arranged with minimal artistic intervention.<sup>14</sup> Placing emphasis on materiality and temporality, their aim was to investigate the presence of the 'thing' in relation to its surroundings, and create the balance necessary to confer meaning to matter.

Artists associated with Mono-ha who took part in the Biennale were Kōji Enokura, Susumu Koshimizu and Katsuhiko Narita. Jirō Takamatsu was also loosely affiliated with this group of artists, although in the capacity of mentor rather than peer. While in 1970 many Mono-ha artists had just graduated, by then Takamatsu was already internationally established, having taken part in several exhibitions abroad and represented Japan in the 34th Venice Biennale (1968).<sup>15</sup>

For the 10th Tokyo Biennale, Takamatsu installed works from his *Oneness* series, such as *Sixteen Oneness* and *Thirty-six Oneness* (both 1970).<sup>16</sup> The latter, depicted in Anzai's photograph, was composed of several cedar logs, cut and then reassembled, showing the manipulation of the material. Exposing the artistic process, the artist turned gesture and technique into the artwork itself.

While Anzai went on to become one of the foremost photographers of Mono-ha, this is one of the few photographs he took of the Japanese artists' participation in the biennial.



Shigeo Anzai, Jannis Kounellis, *The 10th Tokyo Biennale '70 'Between Man and Matter'*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1970, baryta-coated silver print. Courtesy the artist and White Rainbow, London

The years between 1968 and 1970 are also crucial for the establishment of Arte Povera. In 1969 Jannis Kounellis created a work at San Benedetto del Tronto, Italy, composed of a pile of stones that obstructed the entrance to a room, and aimed to recreate it for the Tokyo Biennale. According to the photographer, Kounellis had to give up the realisation of the initial project since Japanese stones were not suited to the purpose and deemed unsafe; eventually Kounellis exhibited instead an iron bar impeding the passage through the doorway.<sup>17</sup>

In the exhibition catalogue, Nakahara explains that he considered the museum as a 'matrix': rather than a *space* for art, the museum was a *place* or a *situation* for its experience. According to his 'theory of presence', the site where the artworks were situated had developed into an integral aspect of the relationship between man and matter.<sup>18</sup> It was therefore important for Nakahara to enable international artists to produce work in response to the local environment. In total, seventeen artists travelled to Japan to install their work, and many had to adapt their projects to what they found in situ. Anzai's pictures remain an important document of that process.



Shigeo Anzai, Christo, *The 10th Tokyo Biennale '70 'Between Man and Matter'*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1970, baryta-coated silver print. Courtesy the artist and White Rainbow, London

A case in point is Christo, who originally planned to cover the walkway of Ueno park. Having failed to get permission, he decided to instead repeat *Wrapped Floor*, a piece that he had installed at the Wide White Space Gallery, Antwerp in 1969, and at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1970. In Tokyo, Christo was allocated a vast exhibition gallery featuring a monument that he was told not to wrap. He draped fabric across the entire room nonetheless, and was soon asked to comply with the organisation's demands. Anzai's photographs capture Christo at work, lifting fabric from different angles with the help of



assistants, showing the collaborative aspect of the installation. Anzai describes his own mode of production as ‘not going straight to the artwork but keeping a distance’, developing a perspective that put him ‘on the side of the artist’.<sup>19</sup> People who know him praise his ability to earn the trust of the artists, claiming that this allows him a crucial insight into their work.<sup>20</sup> It was by building a relationship with the artists at work in the 1970 Tokyo Biennale that Anzai was able to witness history as it happened, seizing it for future viewers.

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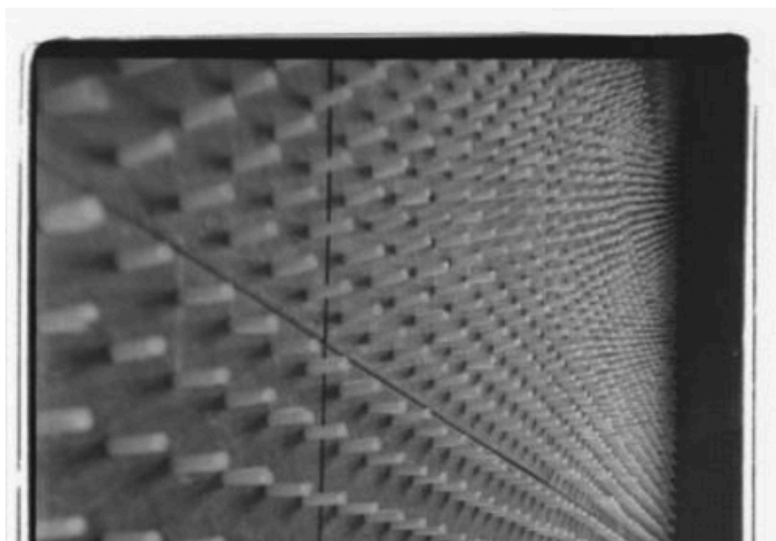


Shigeo Anzai, Haans Haacke, *The 10th Tokyo Biennale '70 'Between Man and Matter'*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1970, baryta-coated silver print. Courtesy the artist and White Rainbow, London

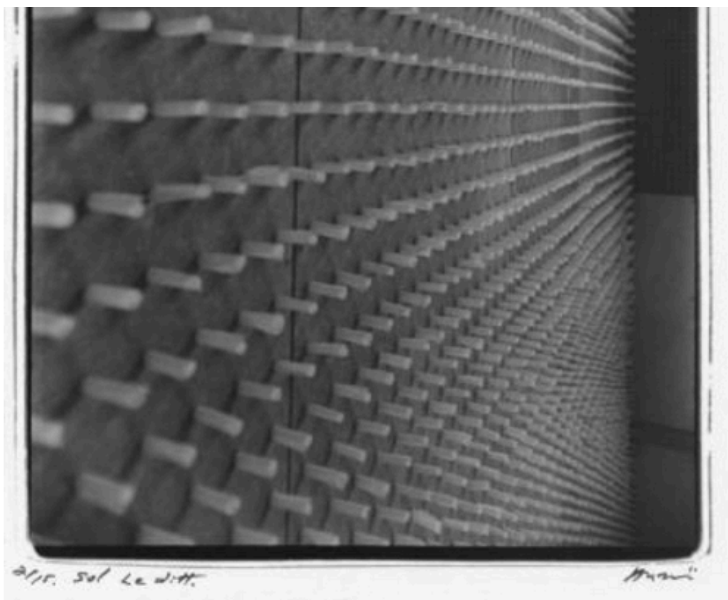
Artists were allocated three pages in the catalogue: one for the artist's biography, the second for their proposal for the Biennale and the third for additional material. In his proposal, Hans Haacke stated that he would not be able to outline a plan until he had the opportunity to carry out the necessary analysis of the local systems in order to ‘expose’ or ‘interfere with’ them.<sup>21</sup> Eventually he designed an intricate circuit of tubes titled *Circulation*, which pumped water and air through a hose system. The floor installation explored the interaction of physical, biological and social structures: the circuit remains unchanged while the flow of water and air

cannot be entirely anticipated. This is considered to be a seminal work for Haacke since it provided the ground ‘for investigations into other kinds of flow (capital, human, etc.) that the artist would develop over the coming years’.<sup>22</sup>

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*Wall Drawing 38* is the only ‘drawing’ conceived by Sol LeWitt that employs a pegboard-and-tissue technique. The artist initially intended to paint the original walls of the gallery but having been denied permission and instead provided with a room made of artificial walls, he proposed an alternative to his iconic *Wall Drawing*.



Shigeo Anzai, Sol LeWitt, *The 10th Tokyo Biennale '70 'Between Man and Matter'*, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1970, baryta-coated silver print. Courtesy the artist and White Rainbow, London

The instructions to produce the artwork are listed in the exhibition catalogue, offering supplementary information to Anzai's black-and-white photograph: tissue paper cut into 4cm squares was to be rolled and inserted into holes in the pegboard walls. All holes in the wall were to be filled randomly according to the following accumulative pattern: first wall: white; second wall: white and yellow; third wall: white, yellow and red; fourth wall: white, yellow, red and blue.<sup>23</sup>

The documentary photographs of LeWitt's and Haacke's work constitute exceptional moments in Anzai's production. Here Anzai opted for a close-up approach that, when compared with most of his installation photographs, sacrifices contextual information in favour of a dramatic representation of materials, texture and composition.

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Shigeo Anzai, Daniel Buren, *The 10th Tokyo Biennale '70 'Between Man and Matter'*, at Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1970, baryta-coated silver print. Courtesy the artist and White Rainbow, London

Anzai captured Daniel Buren on the move. Having been denied permission to paste his iconic stripes directly onto the walls of the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, the artist decided to paper the streets around the museum instead. This series of photographs – six in total – record the spontaneity of the moment, showing Buren running around with a bucket of glue and a roll of paper.

The 10th Tokyo Biennale was tepidly received in 1970 but its popularity has grown ever since and it is now widely considered as a crucial exhibition for the development of internationalism within the Japanese art milieu.<sup>24</sup> Little critical material is available in English, and much of it is based on anecdotal and testimonial evidence, leaving many questions open, such as: What happened to the exhibition's emphasis on process when it travelled to other venues in subsequent months?<sup>25</sup> To what extent did Nakahara's curatorial methodology allow for meaningful exchanges amongst international

artists? How did the encounter between Japanese, European and North American artists inflect their practice? While Anzai's photographs cannot address these questions on their own, they are a vivid reminder of the exhibition's significance and the need to continue to unearth its contribution to the history of contemporary art and its exhibitions.



1. 'Shigeo Anzai: Index I', White Rainbow, London, 25 November 2015–23 January 2016. The show included photographs of historical exhibitions such as 'August 1970 – Aspects of New Japanese Art', National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 1970; 10th Contemporary Exhibition of Japan 'Man and Nature', Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1971; and 8th Japan Art Festival, Tokyo Central Museum, 1973. A second part of the exhibition, focusing on Anzai's portraits of artists titled 'Shigeo Anzai: Index II', was presented at White Rainbow gallery from 18 May–22 June 2016. ↑
2. 10th International Art Exhibition of Japan 'Between Man and Matter', later known as 10th Tokyo Biennale, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 10–30 May 1970; Kyoto Municipal Art Museum, 6–28 June 1970; Aichi Prefectural Art Gallery, Nagoya, 15–26 July 1970; and Fukuoka Prefectural Culture House, Fukuoka, 11–16 August 1970. ↑
3. Secretariat, 'What is Tokyo Biennale, 1970?', *Between Man and Matter* (exh. cat.), Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun-sha, 1970, unpaginated. The exhibition catalogue was co-edited by Yusuke Nakahara and Toshiaki Minemura, whom Asia Art Archive also credits as curator of the exhibition (with Nakahara as Commissioner). See <http://www.aaa.org.hk/onlineprojects/bitri/en/overview.aspx?id=AO49>. ↑
4. The artists included in the exhibition were: Carl Andre, Marinus Boezem, Daniel Buren, Christo, Jan Dibbets, Albrecht Dietrich, Ger van Elk, Kōji Enokura, Luciano Fabro, Barry Flanagan, Hans Haacke, Michio Horikawa, Kenji Inumaki, Stephen J. Kaltenbach, Tatsuo Kawaguchi, On Kawara, Kazushige Koike, Stanisław Kolibal, Susumu Koshimizu, Jannis Kounellis, Edward Krasinski, Sol LeWitt, Roelof Louw, Yutaka Matsuzawa, Mario Merz, Katsuhiko Narita, Bruce Nauman, Hitoshi Nomura, Panamarenko, Giuseppe Penone, Markus Raetz, Klaus Rinke, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, Richard Serra, Satoru Shoji, Keith Sonnier, Jirō Takamatsu, Shintaro Tanaka and Gilberto Zorio. ↑
5. Yusuke Nakahara, 'Between Man and Matter', in *Between Man and Matter*, *op. cit.*, unpaginated. ↑
6. By 1957, Gutai had received broad international attention, especially in Milan, New York and Paris, for the events they had staged in Osaka and Tokyo. John Cage, David Tudor and Robert Rauschenberg delivered lectures at the Sōgetsu Art Center in Tokyo in the early 1960s and in 1966 'Twenty Years of American art', an exhibition organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, travelled to the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo. For more information about exchanges between Japanese and North American and European art, see Doryun Chong (ed.), *From Postwar to Postmodern, Art in Japan 1945–1989: Primary Documents*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2012; and Charles Merewether, Rika I. Hiro and Reiko Tomii, *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan, 1950–1970*, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007. See also R. Tomii, 'International Contemporaneity' in the 1960s: Discoursing on Art in Japan and Beyond', *Japan Review*, no.21, 2009, pp.123–147; and R. Tomii, 'Concerning the Institution of Art: Conceptualism in Japan', *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* (exh. cat.), New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999. ↑
7. Other main exhibitions that explored the connections between Japanese and Western artists are, for instance, 'Mutual Influences Between Japanese and Western Arts' (1968) and 'Contemporary Art-Dialogue between the East and the West' (1969), both held at the National Museum of Art, Tokyo. ↑
8. Of the artists who participated in the 10th Tokyo Biennale, the following had already been featured in both European exhibitions: Andre, Boezem, Dibbets, van Elk, Flanagan, Kounellis, Merz, Nauman, Panamarenko, Ruthenbeck, Serra, Sonnier and Zorio. Meanwhile, Haacke, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Louw and Raetz had taken part in 'When Attitudes Become Form' only; and Andre, Nauman, Serra and Sonnier in 'Anti-Illusion' at the Whitney Museum. For more on 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form', see Christian Rattemeyer (ed.), *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969*, London: Afterall, 2010. For a detailed chart of the participation of the 10th Tokyo Biennale artists in international exhibitions between 1969 and 1971, see Yokho Watanabe (ed.), *Introduction to Archives XIII: Tokyo Biennale '70, Revisited*, Tokyo: Keio University Center, 2016. ↑
9. Y. Nakahara, *Between Man and Matter*, *op. cit.* ↑
10. He went to Europe for the first time in autumn 1974, when he accompanied the sculptor Nobuo Sekine to the exhibition 'Japan på Louisiana' at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Copenhagen. Anzai received a John Davison III Rockefeller fellowship to live in New York for a year in 1978–79. There he documented performances at The Kitchen and established relationships with Bill Viola and Laurie Anderson, among others. ↑
11. Atsuhiko Shima, 'Shigeo Anzai', *Recording on Contemporary Art by Shigeo Anzai 1970–1999* (exh. cat.), Osaka: the National Museum of Art, Osaka, 2000, pp.20–21. ↑
12. Jirō Yoshihara, 'Gutai Art Manifesto' (trans. Reiko Tomii), available at <http://web.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/gutai/data/manifesto.htm> The manifesto was originally published as 'Gutai bijutsu sengen', *Geijutsu Shinchō* 7, no.12, December 1956, pp.202–04. ↑
13. Y. Nakahara, 'Between Man and Matter', *op. cit.* ↑
14. Mono-ha lasted roughly from 1968 to 1973. They never founded a group or issued a manifesto and their production only seems cohesive in retrospect. The most prominent artists involved with Mono-ha were Susumu Koshimizu, Katsuhiko Narita, Kishio Suga and Lee Ufan. ↑
15. Takamatsu was also a co-founder of the performative group Hi Red Center Collective, together with artists Genpei Akasegawa and
16. *Sixteen Oneness* is currently on view at Tate Modern in a room titled 'Between Man and Matter'. ↑
17. Email from Anzai to Edward Ball, 4 February 2016. ↑
18. Y. Nakahara, *op. cit.* ↑
19. Shigeo Anzai, quoted in Tamon Miki, 'About Shigeo Anzai', in *Recording on Contemporary Art by Shigeo Anzai 1970–1999*, *op. cit.* ↑
20. See, for instance, statements by Tamon Miki, Tatsumi Shinoda and Atsuhiko Shima in *Recording on Contemporary Art by Shigeo Anzai 1970–1999*, *op. cit.* ↑

21. Hans Haacke, *Between Man and Matter*, *op. cit.* ↑
22. Carmen Fernández Aparicio, 'Circulation', available at <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/collection/artwork/circulation> ↑
23. Sol LeWitt, *Between Man and Matter*, *op. cit.*, unpaginated ↑
24. In recent years, the 10th Tokyo Biennale has once again been in the spotlight. Earlier this year, Keio University Art Centre in Tokyo presented an archival exhibition titled '[Introduction to Archives XIII: Tokyo Biennale '70, Revisited](#)' (22 February–25 March 2016) as part of an ongoing research project looking at the exhibition. One of Tate Modern's current collection displays is titled '[Between Man and Matter](#)', grouping together works by some of the artists included in the exhibition. Taka Ishii Gallery has recently showed 26 panels by Tatsuo Kawaguchi, which are larger versions of the ones originally created for the 10th Tokyo Biennale, as well as Mario García Torres's project 'The Space We've Got (A Proposal for the 10th Tokyo Biennale's Between Man and Matter)'. In 2010, the Museum of Modern Art, New York recreated Edward Krasinski's installation for the biennale, while in 2014 curator Shinji Kohmoto in collaboration with artist Koki Tanaka organised a two-day workshop at the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art which included, among other things, a reading of Nakahara's statement from 'Between Man and Matter' and an action with fabrics that related to Christo's *Wrapped Floor* installation. ↑
25. Interestingly, on Buren's website, there are images of the same work being recreated in Nagoya, with a note stating that the work was performed by T. Hasegawa. See <http://catalogue.danielburen.com/exhibits/view/62>. ↑