

# From the scene of artistic production

## —Creator's standpoint—

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What is art for human being? Why does human being express? Art is the occurrence that emerges from the fundamental life, more concretely, the re-creation and the re-presentation. This treatise is going to investigate the essence of art from the standpoint of the creator, especially by focusing on the problem of body at the scene of artistic production, and in addition by extracting the interaction of watching while producing there. This art theory puts the essence of art on the expression of life.

### I What is creation

#### **Material and form**

Whether painters or sculptors, artists watch their objects closely, compose them with their own sensibility, and create their works. However, they cannot always create their works as they planned in advance.

Ceramics might be one of the most appropriate examples. First of all, ceramic artists don't believe that they can make their works only by their imagination and ability. What work will be finished, quite largely, depends on the material and the various conditions surrounding the production. A large part of the factors which make up ceramics must be left to nature, such as the composition and nature of clay, the extent of temperature of fire, the humidity, and further, the conditions of the land and climate at the time at the place. In a sense, ceramics is an art that leaves itself to the creativity of nature. Excellent ceramic works are created when the artist listens to the voice of earth, follows the fire and obeys the nature. Ceramics is the art that is created by collaboration of all the factors, not only earth, wind, water and fire but also heaven, earth and man. In that sense, in case of ceramics, there are always aspects that cannot be controlled by human ability, and accordingly, must be left to chance. What kind of tasteful colors will come out must depend on the chance brought about by flames and kilns. Rather, it is also a heart of ceramics to appreciate such chance effects and results.

Ceramics may also be said to be the art in which, while artists make their acts enter nature, nature produces the works for them.

Art works are usually thought to be produced by adding subjective imagination to empirical materials. However, the imagination working on artistic production isn't unlimited. If the imagination is a mere imagination, it would be nothing but a fancy. Also, artists don't always force their images and plans in their mind on the materials directly. At the scene of artistic production, artists are always conditioned by materials. Moreover, plastic arts are realized only by their being conditioned by materials. Certainly materials resist the formative action of art, but on the contrary, they may assist the formative process. Materials are originally shaped as the materials, even if they are stones, earth, wood chips or cloths, and each of them has its own nature such as rugged, grainy, rough or knotty. So, whether a painter or a sculptor, the artist must be well-acquainted with the characteristic of each material in order to create an excellent work.

Artistic production and expression cannot exist without materials. Any shape cannot be formed unless conditioned by materials. When artists work on the materials obediently, the materials themselves respond to them, too. Through this active and passive interaction, creative shapes are born. Shapes are created through artists' encounters with materials.

There are various dialogues with materials in the scene of artistic production. Certainly, shapes work on materials and transform them, while materials also resist shapes and change them. Working on materials and responding from them make the artist's experience, and through that experience, something new is created. However, the artist himself or herself doesn't know precisely beforehand what is born from his or her encounter with materials, and accordingly the artist has an unknown world which cannot be known until the work is completed. Rather, to bring out creative shapes from materials should be said to be the artist's role

Materials and shapes cannot be separated each other clearly. Especially, in the excellent art works, materials and shapes are integrated splendidly. Art works are shaped materials. So, artists must know the materials closely. Sculptors also need to be fully acquainted with the properties of stones and woods. Rather, they must be able to see statues to be produced in stones and woods. In the early Edo period, a unique roughly carved wooden sculpture, Enku who left his innumerable wooden Buddha statues around the country, is told that the moment he saw a tree, he felt a Buddha image appearing from in it. For Enku, the tree was not mere material but life itself, and moreover, just a source from which a living Buddha statue comes out.



Buddha by Enku

We should not look at art works simply as having been shaped beforehand, or as already having been completed. On the contrary, we must examine the process where art works are being produced. What comes out of the production process moment by moment, is an art work. For example, Michelangelo with a chisel in his hand, obediently created that statue of David from a mass of marble stone amid its sparks flying up. It is an act of artist as if he had completely forgotten such ideas as planned beforehand, in which the material and the shape are united into one so that something new could be born.

In that sense, art is one of the techniques. Most artists think of their works as craftsmen's handiworks (*métier*), and are concerned with things in such attitudes. For example, artists are well-acquainted with the characteristics of stones, earth and pigments, and create shapes in close contact with them. It is the artists' hands, tools as extension of them, and their skills that mediate these materials and shapes. Artists are artisans and art is one of techniques. Without it, there would be no *poiēsis* (production). However, probably it was since the modern age that art had been separated from technology. The great arts before the modern age were produced by craftsmanship of craftsmen whose names are scarcely known either.

Art is a technique to modify nature as its material and to complete it to a beautifully pleasant work. The technique accompanies processing of nature. While being helped by nature, it modifies nature and carves shapes on nature. Such an act is just art. Human being learns the creation of nature by the technique. Through such dialogue with nature, artists would be aware of what they themselves are painting. Even excellent painters, much more the more excellent ones, shall watch the things and discover something while painting. Painters learn the essence of things in his creative activities, and through the process, they discover the depth of nature that cannot be grasped by human work.

At the same time, the more nature itself is inquired, the more it increases its depth. This is the reason why Cézanne persistently painted the same types of still lifes and landscapes of Montagne Sainte-Victoire many times, and all of them have not been completed. Art is incomplete. Because of being incomplete, the succeeding works should be produced. Whether in nature or in art, creation involves such incompleteness originally. Life of human being has its end, but art has no end.

### **Creation as occurrence**

The creativity of art cannot be determined only by the intention of artists. Artists also don't necessarily prepare their precise plans and foresee the finished works prior to creative activities. On the way of production, initial intents or plans may be changed thoroughly. Through the process of creating, new ideas may be born. Even the artist's life experience in the way of creation may have some influence on the creation. For example, by encountering the death of a friend's son on the way of composing, the music in composition may suddenly change into a tune of funeral march. Unexpected factors often enter the production process of art work. The secret of artistic creation must be said to be in the creative activity and the process itself. What work will be completed, cannot be grasped in other places than the production process of artists actually working on materials and making creative efforts. In that sense, also in case of painting, new creation is done every moment of the production process where the painter is painting one stroke by one stroke. The production process of art work is the process of inquiry, and accompanies the suffering of birth for creation. Through such inquiry process, artists themselves also grow. In order to grow, artists must not depend only on their own abilities, but, generally speaking, they will have to be assisted by the creativity of great nature. Artistic creation is not different from the creation process of nature and human history, for the artistic activity itself is a part of creation processes of universe.

Creation of art work is an occurrence. Individual created art work includes not only its materials but also the life, history and all occurrences of the artist. In one work, all other occurrences not directly represented there, are consolidated. For example,

Having come over Hakone-road, I see waves rolling on a small offshore island in a view of the sea of Izu.

At a glance, this well-known Japanese poem by Sanetomo MINAMOTO seems like a simple landscape one (1). However, to tell the truth, this poem includes all the past career of Sanetomo who has just crossed over Hakone-road with followers and looked at the sea of Izu suddenly opened. Namely, this poem includes a suggestion of

the retainer, Hojo clan's threatening movement, Sanetomo's anxiety, disturbance, sense of helplessness and so on because of having been the shogun in spite of his youngness, and further, his feeling that he could not help entrusting such loneliness only to a poem, and all the others. The anxiety is also expressed in the state of the white waves which is brought down to the small offshore island. There is lonely Sanetomo whose eyes are gazing at the sound of the white waves that cannot be heard by the ears.

What emerges at the node of every occurrence is what is called creation. The moment of creation includes all the past occurrences and the succeeding new creations. The creation of art work is a one-time history that emerges from all the occurrences' encounters.

In this respect, the meaning of chance in art is significant. Actually, some effect by chance may play a crucial role, like poems that flashed on, or like kiln moderation in ceramics and blotting in ink painting. Art creation includes chances very much which human being cannot control. Rather, those who left everything to mystery of creation beyond human intentions and abilities might produce more creative works. On the contrary, by taking chance in itself like ceramics, it might be also possible to find a more positive meaning of art. Both art and life are continuous creation, and naturally chance enters creation.

### **What is creation?**

What is this activity called artistic production by human being? Why does human being do artistic activity? Where does the art impulse come from?

The hunting people in the latter Paleolithic age also painted pictures of bison and wild boar on the surface of caves or rocks in behalf of unavoidable reason of hunting for living. Van Gogh who got mentally damaged in Arles and was hospitalized to Saint-Remy's Recreational Faculty, also continued to paint a small grayish mountain nearby even on a heavy windy day, fixing the drawing board between the stones with wedges so that it would not brown off in the wind, as if he were possessed by something. From the Paleolithic age's cave paintings to Van Gogh's landscapes, the freshness and the impact that their works convey the viewers are rooted in the artists' impulse to creation itself.



Van Gogh's landscapes

This impulse to paint something is an act itself. It is no longer mere subjectivity. It must be said that this creative act is accompanied by a great power transcending mere artists' will and intention. Artists create as if they were driven by the creative power of universe. Rather, isn't it the great nature's will to creation at the base of art that pushes on and drives the artists' impulse?

Artists put themselves in the world, and create and express through their physical acts. The act of artistic creation itself is within the world. That means that production and expression themselves are already done in the truth of universe. Artists throw their acts of producing into the large stream of the universe, and express the truth that appears naturally by throwing their acts into. To live is to live in the world and to live expressing.

To produce things, both in art and in technology, is itself a work of self-formation of the world. Artistic creation itself is in the entire act of formation of the world. The artists themselves who produce art works come from the work of the world that forms itself. Artists themselves participate practically in the re-creation of the world. Artists re-produce the world in the world. The world is re-created and re-presented through the artists' creative acts. The world is a play constantly re-created and re-presented by the actors of artists. The artists are the mirrors of the world that reflect the world in the world.

## 2 Body-expressing

### **Production on site**

A painter who sold his house in Chiba, moved to live in Amami and continued to paint the nature of Amami, Isson TANAKA lived in Amami for nineteen years till his death of 69 years old, making his living as a dyeing worker for pongee fabric. His life was a lonely and uncanny one far away from the central art world in Japan

However, in Amami where Isson settled for the accomplishment of his artistic achievement, there were vivid nature full of vitality where the blue sea, the blue sky and the white sand beach spread, and Papaya, Bellow, Rubber tree and Sotetsu (Cycad) grew, areal roots of Gajumaru (Banyan tree) took root, large yellow fruits of Adan came, flowers of Dachura and Kuwazuimo (Alocasia) bloomed, colorful birds such as Akahige (Ryukyu robin), Akashobin (Ruddy kingfisher), Rurikakesu (Lidth's jay) and Konohazuku (Oriental scops owl) and so on, fluttered around. Isson threw himself into such the nature of Amami and continued to paint it. It was the work of painting through putting himself into the deep and dense bushes of tropical plants, regardless of the fear of hubs lurking in the grass.

“To live surrounded by materials for painting is very happier than to paint in the atelier after coming back from observation tour for sketch (2)”, Isson wrote the above in his letter. The art of Isson was born from the horizon where the climate of Amami entered his body and the great nature’s breath resonated with his.

In fact, after starting living in Amami and by beginning to paint the plants and birds peculiar to subtropics, Isson’s composition of work has changed completely. His unique way to paint plants in the foreground as if gazed at them and to arrange a distant view of a horizon line or a rock in the background, was the very flesh composition newly born after his settling down to Amami. Isson's artistic production was developed through his being fused into all the activities of heaven, earth and great nature, and his listening to the words of plants and animals, and, in other words, it was achieved under his sympathy with the universe.



Isson’s composition in Amami

Painters don't simply watch the object with their eyes alone. They have their bodies. They throw their real bodies in the scenes and paint what will disclose itself there. Moreover, they paint while watching, and watch while painting. By watching their objects with their own eyes, and by repeatedly gazing at the shapes of stone and rock, the atmosphere of trees and so on, the painters express their essences. Behind it there must be their bodies working in nature and feeling with their skins. As Merlot-Ponty said,

“A painter transforms the world into a painting by leaving his body to the world. (3)”

There exists a painter himself or herself who produces through his or her body and watches objects while producing.

### **Watching while producing**

Cézanne lived in seclusion in his home, Aix-en-Provence, after past the age of 40, and consistently continued to paint the landscape of Provence. It is true that the scenery of Montagne Sainte-Victoire was painted repeatedly many times by Cézanne, but it had never been painted as it was until he began to paint. By Cézanne's painting, Montagne Sainte-Victoire was represented newly. It was attained because Cézanne threw himself into the scene, lived there, and has entered the nature entirely with his body. In Cézanne's touch of one stroke, not only the object but also the atmosphere and light of Provence are represented. There is painted what could be watched only by the one who threw himself into the scene and were absorbed in the nature entirely.



Cézanne Montagne Sainte-Victoire

Cézanne's vision was a physical act. Cézanne watched things not only by his eyes but also by his hands. Cézanne liked to paint still lifes his later years, and painted apples, jugs, coffee cups and tables as if a blind man touched the objects. In still lifes by Cézanne, even the feeling of touching the object, firmness, softness and even smell is painted. Even as for color, he didn't represent only what he watched with his eyes, but painted the colors which his fingers and paintbrushes felt as if he touched with his



hands. The realistic properties of his still lifes come from there. In fact, he painted while physically acting, and then succeeded in painting the certainty and firmness of the existence of things as if they closed in on the things themselves.



still lifes by Cézanne

Certainly, the objects in landscapes and still lifes by Cézanne are newly reconstructed and modulated with his own hands. But they came out as the result of the internal development of Cézanne's hands and brush's movement, not his artificial reconstruction. It was the reconstruction that occurred at an ultimate pole in his way of staring at things while painting through his hands and brushes in order to represent them. Cézanne's vision was the one as act, and accordingly he painted what he watched through his hands and brushes. In addition to this, Cézanne also considered that the interference of I who am painting shall destroy the way things themselves will appear in such the way. He thought that, by overcoming the insights and reflections he himself already had, he had to face things themselves.

Painters watch while painting, and paint while watching. In other words, painters watch by their hands with brushes. They watch through their physical acts. To produce is to watch. Painters paint what comes out while producing. Through producing, things come closer to painters. What comes out in such active vision of painters is painted. Therefore, while painters are painting or drawing, unexpected things that were not in their first plans, may appear. Producing is, like this, to represent the essence of what emerges through the process of activity. In the beginning is act.

Fiedler says about this in his "Source of artistic activity" as follows.

"The hands never practice what the eyes have already done. There, on the contrary, something new occurs, in other words, at the very point where the eyes themselves finish their activities, the hands take over what the eyes are practicing and develop it, and further push it forward. (4)"

Fiedler revived not a mere sight but a vision integrated with body in the artistic activities. Our vision is originally an active act involving the work of body.

Painters represent what they could watch while producing.

The painter's work is an act of whole body. All the senses such as touch, movement and so on, are also concentrated on the painter's vision which is concentrated on the hands of the painter and the tip of his or her brush. The painter is fighting with his or her object while painting. When the painter's whole body works on the object, things appear newly. The painter is watching through his or her body. There is a body behind watching

Representation also starts with a physical activity. Any art cannot represent without producing. Moreover, a body is necessary for producing. To represent through a body is just art. Artists squeeze out their own representations from their bodies, not from their heads. Therefore, the reality of world emerges when and where artists make full use of all their own available means.

The images of animals which the hunting people of the Paleolithic Age represented by scratching on cave walls and rocks, were also extracted from the physical act of hunting for living. The tracing of physical acts accompanying movement became that representation of primitive art. In that sense, imitation (*mimēsis*) has an important meaning for representation. The primitive representative form is born from observing things and people closely, tracing them with movements of eyeballs and hands, etc. and extracting their shapes. Then, the bodies of those who are tracing the shapes of objects, resonate with the objects not only by their hands and eyes, but through their whole bodies. Without those things, any impressive representation will not come out.

This can be also said of paintings, but one of the most appropriate examples would be performers' acting in play. Performers represent by their bodies themselves. And in order for performers to identify with their roles, there must be their excellent tracing of behaviors, that is, imitation. Performers don't necessarily express some state of mind. Rather, in the beginning is their copying the movement of body, and the mind appears along with the movement of body, in other words, emotions and states of mind follow it.

Stanislavsky, a great actor and director of the twentieth century in Russia, named this problem <a method of physical behavior>. Human acts are physical actions in the sense of working on. The representation form is born from there. In order for their performance to be truly creative, performers must create this "method of physical behavior" rather than represent emotions and states of mind. (5)

Zeami, a great Noh performer and director in our country, emphasized the importance of improving skills by practicing the forms of elder man, woman and

warrior, in Noh. In fact, in Noh, the form of putting both hands in front of the face and simultaneously bowing the knees, in other words, this method of physical behavior, represents “lamentation”, that is, a deep sorrow, and not the opposite.

### **Color and shape**

The colors and shapes painted in paintings cannot be considered apart from bodies of both the painters who paint them and the viewers who appreciate them.

For example, the color of a mountain in the distance changes variously depending on the change of sunlight from morning, through afternoon to evening, and the way to paint it is different among painters, too. If so, in this case, the color of the mountain to paint should be said to emerge from the integrated relation of all the elements, such as the sunlight that shines on the mountain, the shadow it makes, the color of the sky adjacent to it, weather condition, in addition to these, the body of the painter himself or herself who is perceiving them. The phenomenon of color in itself is originally nothing but a certain integrated relation between the one who perceives and what is perceived, including the environment surrounding the both.

Moreover, for the problem of the color in painting arising in these relations, the role that the viewer's vision and body play must be also considered. For example, Impressionist Monet developed his own technique that produces the same effect as color mixing, in which, by stippling spots of basic color on a canvas, and on looking at the canvas in a certain distance, the reflected light is integrated on the viewer's retina. The paintings of sunrise as well as water lilies by Monet were executed in such way. At this time, the final completion of this technique naturally depends on the viewer's own vision and body.



Monet Impression Sunrise

Color is not a nature objectively belonging to the object itself nor a physiological nature which seems simply so subjectively. Color is an occurrence that

emerges at the correlation point of a person who perceives and an object which is perceived. And in the case of painting, the person who perceives, whether an artist or a viewer, of course, must involve not only his or her vision but also body.

The shape of object painted in a painting is also determined by the relationship between the painter and the object, and between the viewer and the object. One of the things that are produced from the relation between the painter and the object, and between the viewer and the object, is shape. Painters and viewers also follow the shapes of the objects themselves and the painted objects by their eyes' movements, and trace them by their bodies and their actions. At this time, it will be quite unreasonable to disregard the bodies of painters and viewers working in the background of the pictures.

Things that exist appear with colors and shapes, but their colors and shapes are not peculiar to things.

Colors and shapes don't exist objectively before we see them. The color and the shape are determined by the encounter of the painter with the object as well as by the encounter of the viewer with the picture. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the physical experience of the painter and the viewer in the background. Why are different paintings always painted by a painters? Or why is the same painting understood diversely by viewers? For these problems, it is necessary to consider the difference in the physical experience between the painter and the viewer.

Shapes are made up of lines and planes, but lines are not originally inherent to things. A line is merely a boundary between the object and the surrounding space or between different colors, which appears by receiving light. Nevertheless, painters can abstract the essence of things by lines and represent their reality. The drawn line is not a mere copy from the object, but, in spite of this, it can represent even the three-dimensional nature and the mass of object. Similarly, Oriental ink painting which depends on this principle, can represent everything only by simple brushstrokes in black ink and shadings.

But, also in this case, physical motility must lie behind it. The painter traces the object with his or her eyes and traces with his or her brush. To recognize the object, the painter's physical act is necessary. The realistic contours of apples painted by Cézanne are not in them, but in the vision of the painter staring at them. Moreover, the vision is linked with all the movement of his eyeballs, head and entire body. Because the painter paints the contours of objects with the movement of his or her hand with a brush, the painter is watching the objects by his or her own physical act. The line that the painter paints on the canvas is nothing but a trace of his or her

physical act like the infant picture.

Every line, whether straight or curve, spiral, meander, contains physical act in the background. As for the reason why a standing-up vertical line painted on a canvas represents height, sublime, sometimes tension, we should not forget there is the existence of human being in the background, who makes upright walking and looks up the sky. Also for the reason why a horizon painted on a canvas represents quietness, rest, sometimes infinite, the existence of human being who makes upright walking must be considered, for the earth means the stability of body for human being who makes upright walking.

Planes don't also exist substantially. Planes appear only when there are lines and contours, and therefore they don't exist by itself. Even if all over the canvas was painted in blue, it alone doesn't necessarily mean the representation of the sky. Because everything is caused by relationships, the sky will appear for the first time by painting white clouds or green mountains and producing a boundary between one color and another color. Therefore, in his still lifes, Cézanne intended to represent things on the base of the relationship between color and color, or plane and plane. Cézanne's still lifes in his mature period represent the things' volume, shape, three-dimensionality, presence, etc. on the base of the relationship between color and plane, using neither light and dark method nor perspective. As for Cézanne's paintings, what is often referred to as the three-dimensional, formative or architectural properties is represented by the surprisingly complex composition of color and plane.

In the Oriental ink paintings, even color among these elements is denied. However, even if so, it is possible to represent the three-dimensional nature, perspective, height and depth of the object, for example, by looking at it from the three sides, namely front, left and right, and painting all of these visions on a canvas at once. Sesshu's landscape paintings, by painting not only the three sides but also the upper and lower sides at the same time, succeeded in representing mass of huge rocks.



Sesshu's landscape painting

However, even though the existence of objects and their relationship can be spectacularly represented in the two dimensional world by composing the planes in such the way, there should exist an acting body working in the background. The three-dimensional nature, perspective, height and depth of objects are recognized on the basis of an acting body. The meaning of plane itself must also be considered on the basis of an acting body. In the background of the reason why the ground and the water surface represent the calmness and the stability, the spread of plane represents the composure and the standing-up plane represents the firmness and presence of object, there is the body's existence. Various methods of painting trying to paint the three-dimensional world in the two dimensional one must be premised on the physical motility of artists and viewers.

### **Representation of depth and perspective**

There must be, of course, the motility of body also behind the depth of painting. The most primitive way to represent depth is to paint objects in an overlapping manner or to paint as if one object were hidden by another. However, in order to understand these things as the front and back relation of objects, and in order to perceive some depth there, the sensibility of movement and physical experience of viewer watching them must be required. Originally, perception of space is made up with the help of sensibility of movement including not only vision but also touch. We measure distance not only by our eyes but also by our hands and feet's experience. Also, for the perception of depth, not only vision but also many senses such as sense of touch and sensibility of movement are participating in. Depth is nothing but a physical experience. No matter how excellent the painting using perspective is, if it lacks an

alive experience through the body, the depth could not be recognized there. Depth is nothing but the artist and viewer's alive experience, and accordingly it cannot be explained only by the structure of eyes as sight and retina.

The picture of painting is a reflection of our physical experience. Through this physical experience, what is merely a relationship between color and shape is perceived as distance as well as perspective. Painters make full use of colors and contours to call out such a physical experience. It is because our physical experience and experience of movement are participating in the picture that a landscape with rich depth appears in what is a mere flat surface of canvas which lacks thickness. To put it another way, if it is true that a baby who has no experience of walking sees the full moon in the far distance just like a toy within its reach, probably the baby cannot recognize enough perspective in paintings, even if it has been painted with precise perspective. In order to represent perspective, painters must appeal to the viewers' physical experience. Conversely speaking, since what is necessary for this purpose is only to appeal to physical experience, we could say there are various ways to represent perspective.

Linear perspective is one of the most typical. Linear perspective was born of a device to paint the three dimension on a two dimensional plane, and for the purpose, it is indispensable for a vanishing point. In the painting with linear perspective, objects appear to recede towards this vanishing point. The vanishing point on the canvas corresponds to the viewpoint of the painter outside it. However, the weak point of paintings with linear perspective is that during the execution, the viewpoint outside the canvas must be fixed to this already decided point. If the viewpoint has moved even slightly, the world of this perspective will be destroyed. Moreover, because the viewpoint of painter is outside the canvas while the vanishing point is in the canvas, this perspective must presuppose the separation of the viewer and the things watched by the viewer. In fact, this linear perspective has developed together with the Western modern scientific thought which separates the subject and the object, from the beginning of the 15th century to the beginning of the 17th century.

However, the linear perspective is not always the one and only method of space composition to represent perspective. Even if the laws of linear perspective have been denied, it is possible to paint perspective and space freely.

The San-en-ho (three methods to represent distance) used in the Oriental landscape is one of them. Hei-en-ho (a method to represent horizontal distance), one of San-en-ho, is a method that it does not set a vanishing point unlike the linear perspective, paints a landscape as if a viewer overlooked distant mountains from near

mountains, and represented a panoramic spread and infinite depth of great nature. On the other hand, the Shin-en-ho (a method to represent deeper distance) is a method to paint landscape as if a viewer peeped into the depths of mountains behind mountains in the foreground, and to represent the depth of great nature covered with crowds and unable to see. In addition to these, the Ko-en-ho (a method to represent to higher distance) is a method to represent the height and mass of mountains by looking up the tops of mountains rising from the bottom of mountains. These Hei-en-ho, Shin-en-ho, Ko-en-ho which are called San-en-ho together, differ in their viewpoints and viewing angles from each other, but in Oriental landscape, these different viewpoints and viewing angles are often painted simultaneously in a single picture. Nevertheless, they don't lead to the destruction of objects unlike Cubism. On the contrary, they could represent even the sublime and profound depth of great nature. San-en-ho composes the landscape by multiple viewpoints and free combination of them. From our standpoint that we usually move around freely and see things from pluralistic viewpoints and angles, these ways to represent shifting viewpoints variously might be more suitable to reality.

There are various other ways to represent perspective. One of the masterpieces of landscape by Tohaku HASEGAWA, "Shorin-zu-byobu (The folding screen of Pine Trees)", represents not only perspective but also depth of space, even the existence of moist atmosphere and light by using shades and densities of black ink and by overlapping hazy pines with fog.



Tohaku HASEGAWA, "Shorin-zu-byobu"

In addition, as shown in "Kanagawa-oki-namiura (The Great Wave off Kanagawa)", one of the most famous Ukiyo-e by Hokusai KATSUSIKA, in which Mt. Fuji in a distance is painted as if it were viewed among the great waves in the foreground, it is also possible to represent perspective, volume and infinite feeling by depicting what is in the foreground larger, omitting the middle view and depicting what is in a distant smaller. Isson TANAKA's paintings depicting Amami also uses this



method.



Hokusai KATSUSIKA, “Kanagawa-oki-namiura”

On the contrary, in order to paint things themselves, there might also be cases where it is better to ignore the perspective completely. For example, by denying any vanishing point and line of the linear perspective, and by establishing the unique space composition arising from the relationship of colors and planes, Cézanne could paint things as if they came close to the viewers, such as his still lifes and Montagne Sainte-Victoires. Also the flatly painted representation of ants, eggs, raindrops and so on, by Morikazu KUMAGAI in his later years succeeded in representing the life of them by ignoring the perspective and painting flatly only in the combination of contours and colors.

It should be noticed that physical experiences such as a sense of touch and sensibility of movement of the artist and the viewer is presupposed also in the background of these ways to paint perspective or things themselves while overcoming the linear perspective.



Morikazu KUMAGAI Raindrops

Whatever art is, it has limitations of means. Art cannot be realized unless it is limited. As paintings are limited to the two dimensional world, every painter has to devise the way to paint three dimensional objects on two dimensional canvas. How is it possible to represent the attributes of the three-dimensional world in the two

dimensional world, such as width, height and depth, spread and size, bulk and depth, solidity, mass and perspective? Painters resolve and represent this problem with the help of the viewer's body working in the background. The painting is not closed in the world of canvas alone. When all the factors such as the artist who produces it, the viewer who appreciates it and the place where it is placed and so on, have been brought together on the canvas, the spatial representation in painting is established for the first time. Why is a mere sheet of cloth or paper painted with paint or ink is emerging before us with a profound spatial meaning? In order to solve this problem, we must take account of a problem of ground against such figures. Painters are, as it were, magicians who use the motility of our body working on the background of canvas to create illusions of the three dimensional world in the two dimensional world.

### **Representation of time and movement**

Paintings have a limit not only to paint a three-dimensional world but also a larger one to paint changes of time, too. Paintings can only represent a momentary scene of phenomena that flows moment by moment.

Nevertheless, it was not always difficult to represent the flow of time in the world of painting. The picture scrolls of our country have represented the time boldly by painting the momentary scenes side by side. In “The Tale of Genji Ekotoba (Picture scroll of the Tale of Genji)”, “Makura-no-soshi Ekotoba (Picture scroll of The Pillow Book)”, “Honen-Shonin Eden (Illustrated Biography of Priest Honen)” etc., representation of time was made possible by a free depiction like the shift of landscapes. Probably “Sansui-Chokan (Long Scroll of Landscapes)” by Sesshu is one of the most completed forms of this type. In “Sansui-Chokan”, the same person appears repeatedly as the pictures of Long Scroll progress. As the result, viewer can travel and experience life together with the person in the picture. Like reliefs depicting the achievements of saints of Buddhism and Christianity, representation of time in the scroll-type has been traditionally adopted widely all over the world from long ago. Of course, also in these cases, like the worshipers going around the corridor of the Borobudur Temple, the viewers’ movement of body and viewpoint is necessary.



Sesshu “Sansui-Chokan(a part)”

Paintings are also not suitable for representing movement, for painting can only catch the live movement in a momentary static form. However, the essence of life is a constant movement. In order to overcome this contradiction, Impressionist Degas made his own effort to represent movement of things in two dimensional space in contrast to Cézanne. In fact, the drawing lines of Degas are moving. Unlike cameras which stop the moving things at the moment in order to see, Degas chased movement of things with his eyes, chased the movement of the eyes with his hand holding a pencil, and drew. Degas preferred dancers and so on, for his subjects, and, for that reason, he didn't show his interest in landscape and not still life either. For Degas, movements of persons and their limbs were attractive. Degas was willing to deform objects to represent the movement. Of course, also in this case, it goes without saying that the exercise experience of the viewers is necessary so that they could see Degas' dancers moving.



Degas Dancer on the stage

Among our traditional tea room buildings, there are some using distorted natural logs called Yugamibashira (a distorted pillar), and the disordered tune they make gives a kind of movement to the quiet tea room. Because of the distortion of the pillars, movement arises in the planes or lines constituting the room. Our arts are

inclined to favor imbalance, asymmetry, unfinished, which naturally cause movement. Of course, in the background of attempts to represent the movement of these things, there must be also our physical movement to grasp them as movement. When the body moves, it always leans.

If so, in contrast to paintings, representation of space and time becomes quite free in such the art as play which intends to represent through the person's movement itself.

The free representation of space in Noh of our country would be one of the most representatives. The square Noh stage with a side of 3 ken (about 17.7 feet) length is merely a completely empty space as such, but it becomes a seaside, a deep mountain, a main street of metropolitan, an inside of boat and so on, along with the development of the play. In addition, by only placing a simple artificial object in it, it also becomes a temple's precinct, a noble man's neya (a sleeping room), a desert wild field, a battlefield where brave soldiers fight and so on. In fact, in Noh play "Kantan (The Pillow of Gourd)", the space symbolized by the same artificial object becomes an inn, a vast royal palace and so on, and moreover the same artificial object itself becomes a bed of inn, a throne of royal palace and so on. By such flexible treatment of space, Noh play "Kantan" represents the glory of fifty years that has turned into a sleeping dream. In Noh, the shift of scene, distance and so on, is carried out freely according to the change of what to consider the stage.



Noh play "Kantan"

Also, as shown in Mugen-Noh (Dream-Noh), representation of time is also free in Noh. The performing stage will become a past world, a present one, another one, this one. In Noh, extreme compression of time is also possible by transcending the physical time of reality.

Noh play transcending the rationality and the realism made the free shift and elasticity of time and space possible by making full use of what to consider the scene. It was a phase change of time and space, and it was a transcendence to a symbolic time and space. On the stage of Noh, such a symbolic time and space is freely directed from

the first nothing space on opening to the last nothing space on closing. However, the world created by these plays is the illusory and false one. At the place where the false world represents what is real, art is realized. Paintings try to represent three dimensional space, time and movement in two dimensional world, which means that they create false space just on the premiss of the viewers' physical experience. Paintings have the restriction of two dimensions, but under this restriction, they create the false world and realize the art. The image created there is neither subjective nor objective. The image that arises at the coincidence of both, is indeed the false world, but this false world enables art.

### 3 Activity and passivity

#### **Active passivity**

The lovers of the tea ceremony in our Sengoku period loved ceramics of great individuality and vivid power. They preferred the imbalanced, the incomplete, especially the discord to the standardized and sophisticated. They gave their attention to unpretentious ceramics as miscellaneous goods for the common people, and found their beauty. Such the beauty of ceramics is supported by the beauty of tactile sensation. In order to appreciate ceramics, it is not enough to look at them alone. It is necessary to pick up it with hands, appreciate the shape and feel the sense of touch. In both production of ceramics and appreciation of it, the sensation of touch plays an important role. The true reality of things cannot arise unless they are touched.

The sense of touch is not a passive sensation but an active sensation. Generally speaking, representation is to create a certain shape, but its shape is first obtained from active sense of touch. Sense of touch is the most physical and direct, in which the distance between a person who perceives and what is perceived becomes zero. Sense of touch is the tip of physical sensation and the starting point for every other sensation. Sense of touch is also indispensable for sense of vision and sense of hearing. In case of painting, painters trace the shapes of things with their eyes. In other words, their eyes are touching them. Also in the sense of vision, works of sense of touch and of movement are hidden. In fact, in their actual production, the painters paint their objects with the brushes in their hands as if they traced their shapes. In other words, the painters are touching with their paintbrushes. Painters paint with their hands and watch with their hands. When a painter puts himself or herself in the world and approaches things by his or her eyes, things opens themselves to the painter as well. At that time, the appearance of things that cannot be seen by ordinary people,

comes into the painter's eyes as painter. To paint the things appearing in such a way, is just the painter's job. To watch means that my entire body works towards the objects. Things become visible because of watching them, and anything doesn't become visible unless watching them. It is not until things are watched that they become visible. Just as we can know what was touched by touching it, we know what was watched by watching it.

What a painter sees is concretely colors, shapes and lines, but they are not what belong to things as such. However, the painter finds colors, shapes and lines there and paints the things by them. To watch is not mere reception but creation. Moreover, the painter watches while painting. When the painter is completely absorbed in the act of painting, things become visible. Moreover, the act of painting is an act through the body. We can know the object by the active act of facing it and tracing it, as a sculptor produces his or her work while touching it, or as a blind person feels the beauty of cast by touching it with his or her hands.

When we throw ourselves in nature entirely, there is something which nature speaks to us. When a painter sees a tree, the tree also sees the painter. At the place this activity and passivity accords, there is a source of creativity.

Cézanne walked around the outfield of Provence to look for his motifs of painting, but he always went out without holding preconception. Rather, he encounters with nature without any preconception. At the moment he has encountered with nature, in other words, when he gained a sense of being watched by nature rather than watching nature, Cézanne was able to find his motif for painting for the first time. At the point of encounter of a viewer and what is watched, or at the point of accord of a person who feels and what is felt, the artistic creativity is lying. As Cézanne often said that nature is <sense>, the <sense> was just a direct experience that consisted of accord of activity with passivity. It is passivity with activity. Like the hunting people in the Paleolithic age, the active act through body brings out life in the object.

### **<Mononoaware> and emotion of art**

Art is that someone feels something beautiful and expresses its emotion, but its emotion is not merely subjective. Emotion is usually considered as a subjective feeling caused by an affection of object, but behind it, an acting body and its active acts must exist. Pathos (passion) is a kind of physical trauma, but this is not simply passive, but active. The sympathy arising between an artist and an object, or an art work and a viewer is also a common sense that occurs in their acting bodies, and their living bodies must exist there. Being moved is an occurrence that arises when activity and passivity

agreed with.

Norinaga MOTOORI, a literary scholar in Edo period, interpreted “The Tale of Genji” and regarded the essence of this literary work as a representation of <Mononoaware>. To understand The Tale of Genji is to know <Mononoaware>. To know <Mononoaware> is,

“to encounter what to feel, to know a mind to feel and to feel. (6)”

To know not only sadness but also all emotions of heart, such as happy, interesting, delightful, and funny and so on, is to know <Mononoaware>. Tales and poems are born from deep emotions that cannot be expressed by words.

However, this deep emotion is not simply a subjective feeling. <Mono> of <Mononoaware> is a thing and simultaneously a heart (spirit). It is also a material phenomenon and simultaneously a mental phenomenon. It is subjective and simultaneously, objective. It is direct. Moreover, without activity of <touching things>, this feeling is not born.

“To encounter an affair, and then to know sensibly the heart of the affair, happy or sad, is to know Mononoaware. (7)”

This opinion of Norinaga represents the above said, so well.

<Aware> is originally a combination of exclamations <ah> and <hare>, therefore it means a cry which a person who encountered things and has been moved by them, gives unconsciously. “When seeing something, hearing something and touching some affair, the voice of lament coming out from the heart feeling their affections” (8) is <Aware>. This exclamation is neither subjective nor objective, but it should be said to come from a direct experience where activity and passivity agree with each other. The emotional world coming out in the contact between a phenomenon and <I>, is <Mononoaware>. Emotion is born from such a direct experience that is active and simultaneously passive, and expression is born from this emotion, and recognition is born along with the expression. Norinaga’s theory of <Mononoaware> summarizes the structure of art stated above, splendidly in a word.

A well-known preface of “Kokin-Wakashu”, a collection of Japanese poems compiled by imperial order in the beginning of the 10th century, also insists that Waka is the Japanese poem in which the emotion affected by nature and life event is spontaneously expressed with words. As stated there, poems that move even heaven and earth and make the invisible gods feel <Aware> with deep emotion, were certainly expressed on seeing or hearing, but, in order to be affected by the seen or the heard, the active act of <seeing> or <hearing> is lying simultaneously there (9). The deep emotion which is the source of expression, is what springs from a source that is neither

subjective nor objective, in other words, the direct experience being active and simultaneously passive.

### **Self-seeing and self-seen**

When painting a portrait, the painter paints while gazing at the model, but at the same time, the painter is also watched by the model. To watch is to be watched, and to watch the object is also to watch self. Activity is simultaneously passivity, and the passivity lights on artist's self. When I try to paint a thing, the thing comes closer to me and shoots at myself. Art is a representation of the artist's self united with his representation of the thing. Mirroring of a self and a thing each other is art. Therefore, representation is not an act of expressing something already inside the mind but an act of discovering self by representing. The experience of artistic production is to know self and to transcend self each production. Accordingly the painter's own personality is reflected in the object that the painter paints. When the painter paints a certain object, the painter also simultaneously represents his or her way to watch the object. By touching something, we can know ourselves touching. Equally, by acting, we know ourselves acting.

The self-portraits painted by painters illustrate this best. When I try to see a mirror and see it practically, I see myself looking at the mirror. Similarly, in the depiction of self-portrait, the person who looks at is the same as the person who is looked at. Cézanne also painted self-portraits many times all his life. In these, Cézanne who is painting Cézanne is Cézanne, and Cézanne being painted by Cézanne is painting Cézanne. Cézanne is painting Cézanne by watching Cézanne in the mirror, but Cézanne in the mirror is also painting Cézanne by watching Cézanne. The viewer knows the viewer by being watched by the watched viewer. Vision is never one-way. Vision always returns to itself like an uroboros that coils itself up and eats its own tail.



Cézanne Self-portrait



In the background, there is the recursion of body itself. As Merleau-Ponty says, my body watches myself watching, and I touch myself touching. My body is what watches and, at the same time, what is watched (10). In the fact that the viewer and what is watched are replaced, in other words, in <recursion of body> that the body as the subject can always be the body as the object, we have to confirm the deepest structure of art.

<Riken-no-ken (Performer's figure watched on Riken) > which Zeami insisted in his theory of Noh, "Kakyō", also gets to the point appropriately that art is born from the mutual reflection of watching and being watched as well as representing and knowing self. According to Zeami, the performer's figure which is played only by eyes of the performer himself is merely <Gaken (Self-centered view)>, accordingly there must coexist a figure of performer seen by the audience, that is, <Riken (Leaving self-centered, view on the audience eyes)>. In other words, the performer must gain the audience's eyes as his own, and watch his figure reflected in it, and perform by watching every parts of his body which <Gaken> cannot cover. Zeami names such the state of performing <Riken-no-ken> (11) and says as follows. If the performer can watch through the audience's eyes as his own and can perform while watching himself reflected in the audience's eyes, the performer could perform sharing the same heart with his audience. Then the performer doesn't perform according to the subjectivity. Dance of Noh never become graceful if the performer is dancing without watching his own dancing figure.

In addition to this, Zeami says that an understanding of <Mokuzenshingo (Look before the eyes and put the heart in the background)> is necessary for such the dance. <Mokuzenshingo> is to put the eyes of heart behind the performer himself while looking forward with his eyes. What it means is to have another eyes of heart in order to watch the dancing figure of performer himself from all angles objectively. If doing so, the performer doesn't need to use artificial techniques and doesn't worry about Hutei (Appearance), and therefore, his limbs can perform flexibly along the natural flow. Then, for the first time, the state where the performer and the viewer sympathy each other and form a completely harmonious whole, namely "Kenshodoshin (The same accorded mind with audience)", could be obtained (12).

This Zeami's opinion <Riken-no-ken> obtained from his long practice, tells thoroughly how excellent art is created from the sympathy of the audience-watching and the performer-watched, as well as self-representing and self-represented. To represent is to be watched. And the performer can watch himself by being watched. When the performer is in the position watching such the self, the performer will be

able to transcend himself and enter a deeper state. Moreover, the viewers who are watching the performance can also be in the position to watch themselves watching, by themselves being reflected by watching the performance. In that sense, the viewers also could be said to reach a higher level, namely, <Riken-no-ken>, by watching. From the mutual reflection of the audience-watching and the performer-being watched, or self-watching and self-watched, the state in which the subject and the object as well as the activity and the passivity are united into one, that is, <Riken-no-ken> can be obtained.

### **Recognition by action**

Zeami repeatedly emphasizes the importance of entirely devoting oneself to lesson in “Hūshikaden”(13). The base of art is lesson. The essence of art is on the way to be completed by lesson or training. The flower of art will bloom only after repeated lessons. There is a traditional idea of Japanese art that artistic activity is the process of self-realization by physical activity. Art is self-recognition through physical activity. It means knowing with one’s own body. Then it will be possible to raise self higher through art.

At the same time, we could reach the direct recognition of things by this. Art is neither a taste nor a feeling of comfort • discomfort, but recognition. It is recognition through representation. It doesn’t mean expressing because of following recognition, but recognition because of following representation. Recognition can be obtained by producing through the body, namely creating through fighting with the object and receiving the restrictions by materials. Only active passivity strengthens the recognition of the world and self. The essence of art consists in watching the object while producing, and more concisely speaking, watching while producing.

Kitaro NISHIDA, our philosopher, called this essence of art, namely watching while producing, <acting intuition>. Our self is formed by the world and at the same time, forms the world. Moreover, it forms the world through the body. Our body is made by the world, and simultaneously it makes the world. Artistic creation is also a creative work that, working on the world through the body, represents the world. Things become visible for the first time by working on through the body. So, Nishida called this act, namely watching through physical act, <acting intuition> and he grasped the creative activities of art from this horizon. To act is to watch and to watch is to act. We watch by producing and produce by watching. We watch by working and work by watching. We work by becoming the thing and watch by becoming the thing. More speaking, then, self-watching becomes visible. Nishida says this as follows, “Thing

comes and shines on me”. The work to grasp a thing and self simultaneously, is <acting intuition> and, at the same time, it is the origin of art (14).

What an artist watches by producing or watches by painting is a direct experience. What an artist strives to give a concrete shape is an experience that appears before his or her eyes. For Impressionist painters, the impressions of shining colors that they watch in full of light and the impression of constantly shifting light are the most immediate appearances of the visible landscape and their direct experiences. What painters fix on their canvases is the direct experience they are watching at this moment but never watch again. We cannot know what we will watch before we watch it practically. The moment our innocent eyes have unexpectedly found out anything there, we are moved by it. The moment when we were moved, in other words, the moment we felt <Mononoaware>, a song is born, a picture is born, and a music is born. That is the direct experience. Art is the representation of such direct experience. This has not changed from the Paleolithic Age to the present.

Under such direct experience, there is no distinction between the subjective and the objective, and the self and the object are not separated. In fact, the exclamation and emotion of “Ah beautiful” is an occurrence arising from an encounter of the subject and the object, and therefore it is neither the simply subjective nor the simply objective. The source of artistic spirit (inspiration) is also in an encounter of the subject and the object. The image of thing is also usually considered to be subjective or emotional, but if considering the intervention of physicality, it is known that it is not the mere subjectivity. Color and shape are also occurrences arising from an encounter of the artist and the object. The act of artistic creation is also a practice that unites subjectivity and objectivity through a body. When an artist throws himself or herself into an object through his or her body and tool as its extension, the object also responds to him or her. Representation is made in this active passivity, namely the correspondence between the subjective and the objective. Art is born out of the place where the subject and the object are not divided, and therefore, the essence of art cannot be grasped by subjectivism and not by objectivism either.

If so, in spite of the modern subjectivism view of art, we can regard art as neither an object of passive sensibility, nor a product of mere imagination and empathy. Kant thought that beauty is not the nature of things outside but the sensitive that comes from the mental attitude of the human being who watches things, and insisted that, when imagination and understanding work each other freely, human beings’ eyes can see the beautiful (15). This subjectivist aesthetics of Kant must be criticized. Neither sensibility nor imagination is necessarily our mere subject. Only in the

encounter of the subject with the object, there is the root of life. The work of life is art.

Footnote:

1. Sanetomo MINAMOTO, *Kinkaiwakashu* in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 29: Sankashu Kinkaiwakashu*, revision and annotation by Yoshio Kojima, Iwanamishoten, 1971, p.408.
2. Tomone Oya, *Isson Tanaka: Hojo no Amami* Nihonhososhuppanyokai, 2004, p.92.
3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Loeil et Lesprit*, Gallimard, 1964, p16.
4. Konrad Fiedler, *Der Ursprung der kunstlerischen Tätigkeit IV*, schriften uber kunst, hrsg. Konnerth, 1913-14
5. Jean Benedetti, *Stanislavski: An Introduction 4*, Bloomsbury Mthuen Drama, 2008
6. Norinaga Motoori, *The Tale of Genji: Tamanoogushi: The second chapter* in *Motoorinorinaga-zenshu vol.4*, Chikumashobo, 1969, p.203.
7. Norinaga Motoori, *Isonokami-no-sasamegoto: The first chapter* in *Motoorinorinaga-zenshu vol.2*, Chikumashobo, 1969, p.100.
8. Norinaga Motoori, *The Tale of Genji: Tamanoogushi: The second chapter* in *Motoorinorinaga-zenshu vol.4.*, Chikumashobo, 1969, p.201.
9. *Kokin-wakashu* in *Shinnihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 5*, revision and annotation by Noriyuki Kojima and Eizo Arai, Iwanamishoten, 1989, p.4.
10. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Ibid*, pp.18-19.
11. Zeami, *Kakyō* in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 65*, revision and annotation by Minoru Nishimura, Iwanamishoten, 1971, p.415.
12. *Ibid*, p414, p415
13. Zeami *Hushikaden: chapter1, 3* in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 65: Karonshu Nohgakuronshu*, revision and annotation by Minoru Nishio, Iwanamishoten, 1971, pp.343-348., pp.363-367.
14. Kitaro Nishida, *Rekishiteikeiseisayo-tositeno-Geijutsutekisosaku* in *Nishida Tetsugaku Senshu vol.6 (Art Philosophy Theory Collection)*, ed. by Kenichi Iwaki, Toeisha, 1998, p.259-
15. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* Ph.B., Felix Meiner, S. 55ff.

Author's note:

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