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# Situating Intermedia and Expanded Cinema in 1960s Japan

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## Introduction

Two prints of the same film are projected simultaneously and on top of one another. A few seconds delay separates the overlapping images, the resulting effect being one image appears as a ghost of the other, chasing its counterpart but never quite reaching it. Onscreen, a point-of-view perspective gives a gliding tour of a familiar city with its inhabitants occasionally joining in with on-street performances and happenings. Back at the site of projection, the artist, standing next to the 16mm projectors, is holding up several colored gels to give different color tones to the black-and-white images. As the projection takes place across approximately forty minutes, the artist introduces increasing numbers of colors, blocks the light with his hands, and alternates these interruptions against the light between the two projectors. A digital clock, with the time out of sync between the two projectors, fills the frame for the last few minutes until the two projectors run out of film one after the other.

What I describe here is what an audience might have seen on the first occasion that *Phenomenology of Zeitgeist* (*Jidai seishin no genshōgaku*, 1967), a performance with two analogue film projectors, was presented to the public in Jiyū gekijō in Tokyo, as part of their event series *The Underground in March* (*Sangatsu no angura*) in March 1967. Sandwiched between the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo and the 1970 World Exposition in Osaka, 1967

in Japan marks a period of economic ascendance years after their defeat against the Allied forces in World War II. Political unrest is on the rise as the re-signing of the Anpo US-Japan Security Treaty approaches: scheduled for 1970, this event is set to occur in a moment when American military forces are in Vietnam, universities have been exposed for their misappropriation of money, and farmers are being forcibly ejected from their land to build what will become Narita airport. Counterculture is in emergence as a symptom of social progress and unrest, with the streets becoming a stage for public performances and a site for casual hippie (*fūten*) hangouts. Miyai Rikurō, the artist responsible for *Phenomenology of Zeitgeist*, sits at the center of this whirlwind as a well-known hippie, regularly featured in magazines and interviewed on television as a representative of his generation, but also as an artist and critic active in shaping the discourse and practice of the Japanese art community, and particularly that of the emerging movement of Expanded Cinema that was to become an integral part of his and others' artistic practice in the years to come.

Despite being considered the first of a wave of works in Japanese Expanded Cinema to feature multiple projectors—a setup frequently utilized by artists working in Expanded Cinema in Japan and elsewhere—both *Phenomenology of Zeitgeist* and Miyai Rikurō mostly go unmentioned in the recent historicization of expanded cinema in the English language. In the past ten or so years, many events and several publications have identified expanded cinema as an international phenomenon that transcended national boundaries in the 1960s and '70s with artists such as Carolee Schneemann, Stan VanDerBeek, Robert Whitman, Malcolm Le Grice, Lis Rhodes, and Valie Export broadly considered key figures of this movement. While Japanese artists at the time were traveling to and from other countries, the paucity of readily available information on their activities in expanded cinema, and the absence of texts on their works in a language other than Japanese has meant that their contributions to expanded cinema has been

mostly ignored. In the edited collection *Expanded Cinema: Art, Performance, Film* (Tate, 2011), the only Japanese artists mentioned were the Kansai-based artist collective Gutai, whose contributions to cinema beyond documenting their actions and activities were minimal, and Iimura Takahiko, whose artworks mentioned were only those made or presented outside of his home country. This kind of omission, though certainly not intentional, creates a dominant narrative that the movement existed primarily among Euro-American art circles and flattens not only the geographical scope the movement reached but also minimizes its impact on Japanese art.

Research and curatorial activities of recent years, such as those initiated by scholars of Japanese arts and cinema as well as members of Collaborative Cataloging Japan, including myself, have sought to highlight contributions made by Japanese artists to expanded cinema in order to shift its current historicization to incorporate a broader, international perspective. In their English-language writing on 1960s Japanese arts, Yuriko Furuhashi and Miryam Sas have both identified expanded cinema as an integral component of the period's artistic and critical discourse. Curatorial activities have similarly sought to introduce these works to a broader and international public. In 2016, Hirasawa Go and I co-curated the series *Throwing Shadows: Japanese Expanded Cinema in the Time of Pop* (January 2016), which was presented at Tate Modern (with co-curator George Clark) and International Film Festival Rotterdam, alongside an academic symposium at the University of Westminster. In this series, the artists Miyai Rikurō, Shūzō Azuchi Gulliver, and Okuyama Jun'ichi were invited to reenact their historical works of expanded cinema that were originally performed in Japan in the 1960s and '70s to audiences in Europe for the first time. A year later, with Hirasawa and I as curatorial advisors, the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum in Ebisu launched the exhibition *Japanese Expanded Cinema Revisited* (August 15–October 15, 2017), which, for the first time in Japan, provided a comprehensive

account of the existence of this historical movement in its local art and film history. We also curated smaller scale performance and exhibition presentations on Japanese Expanded Cinema at Eye Filmmuseum (Amsterdam), the Art Institute of Chicago, and BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts (Brussels). As these works encountered a public for the first time in years, museums began to express their interest in acquiring them for their collections, ensuring the preservation of these works in art history and hopefully for those curious in the future. The collective efforts of our work as Collaborative Cataloging Japan, led by Ann Adachi-Tasch, have sought to identify the location and conditions of the film materials for Japanese works of expanded cinema, which had been historically neglected as neither the film archive nor the art museum considered them to fall under their curatorial remit, occupying a space between the disciplinary boundaries of film, performance, and installation. In a sense, the description of *Phenomenology of Zeitgeist* that opened this introductory chapter was only made possible to imagine through these efforts: firstly, through the archival research that located original descriptions of the performance; secondly, through an extensive interview with the artist; and finally, through staging a reenactment of the performance by the artist in the contemporary context.

As more attention has been placed on works of Japanese Expanded Cinema, it has become necessary to situate them within the local context in which they emerged. To simply apply the definitions of terms such as “intermedia” and “expanded cinema” as they pertain to the American and European discourse would be to reduce the critical debates involving these terms upon and after their arrival into the Japanese art community. With this in mind, we asked ourselves: What was the critical and artistic context in which Expanded Cinema became a phenomenon in Japan? How were Japanese critics analyzing these works and how were event organizers promoting them? How did Japanese artists describe their own and other peers’ works? While Japanese artists

and critics used the terms “intermedia” and “expanded cinema” as loanwords, the interpretation of the terms often varied according to who used them. On the one hand, these terms were often discussed in relation, often in comparison or in contrast, to the debate on media interaction and interdisciplinary practice predating the arrival of the two terms. On the other hand, “intermedia” and “expanded cinema” became terms of convenience to legitimize new work or theoretical approaches by placing one’s critical stance within a global context or qualifying a statement by aligning it with an international movement. Moreover, the terms themselves negotiated different interpretations within their birthplace of the United States and beyond, and in many ways continue to do so. Parsing through the particularities of the critical discourse on “intermedia” and “expanded cinema” within Japan became necessary in order to ensure that dominance of the English language interpretations of the terms isn’t assumed, especially with regards to the analysis of local case studies.

This desire to bring the Japanese discourse on “intermedia” and “expanded cinema” into the broader discussion on 1960s and ’70s experimental arts and expanded cinema was the genesis of this book project. Rather than assuming the interpretations of the terms were the same as their counterparts abroad, we decided to commission translations of a selection of key texts that we felt were instrumental in shaping the specific discourse around these terms. While we consider the choices to have been made with care, they are by no means meant to be comprehensive, and we of course welcome any further commitments to identifying and translating key texts on the subject. The essays selected are written by an assortment of figures in the Japanese art scene ranging from artists who themselves practiced expanded cinema, such as Imura Takahiko, Miyai Rikurō, Jōnouchi Motoharu, and Manabe Hiroshi, to critics like Satō Jūshin and Ishiko Junzō, in an effort to demonstrate the texts were neither anomalies nor debates held in isolated cliques. The printed matter in which these essays were

originally published were similarly varied. As the notion of intermedia and the practice of expanded cinema touched on different artistic disciplines, texts were published in magazines in the different fields of architecture (*Shōten Kenchiku* [Commercial architecture]), design (*SD* [Space Design]), art (*SAC Journal* and *Bijutsu Techō* [Art notebook]) and cinema (*Eizō Geijutsu* [Image arts], *Eiga Geijutsu* [Film art], *Eiga Hihyō* [Film criticism], and *Kikan Firumu* [Film quarterly], among others). Not only that, key texts on the subject were published on posters, flyers, and other ephemera printed on the occasion and for the promotion of several events that took place and that are broadly considered to have been integral to the discussion on intermedia and expanded cinema. While printed matter of this kind is often denied importance, it arguably shaped how audiences—including the artists themselves and the critics—experienced the artworks in a more impactful way, as they were directly accessible to the attendees, unlike magazines and journals.<sup>1</sup> Our selection of critical texts also includes several articles that predate the arrival of the terms “intermedia” and “expanded cinema,” even in the United States, and certainly in Japan. Their inclusion was important in order to acknowledge the existence of discussions surrounding the subject before it got crystallized, as well as to paint a picture of the context in which these terms were imported. In some cases, as will be discussed later, Intermedia and Expanded Cinema, written in *katakana*, were distinguished as loanwords, giving the writer an opportunity to use these terms to be in dialogue with the latest international and contemporaneous discourse on the arts. Whether the articles were for publication within the pages of journals or on the pamphlet of an event series, the writer’s position and their intention must be

acknowledged in all these cases: much of these texts were written to advocate a certain way of understanding the terms rather than analyzing them, which may account for why so many artists practicing expanded cinema wrote about it.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the way “intermedia” and “expanded cinema” were discussed and practiced was mutually reciprocal and influential. On the one hand, the works categorized as expanded cinema directly impacted upon how these terms were interpreted; on the other hand, the discussion of the terms themselves influenced the forms and approaches expanded cinema would take.

Often presented as one-off events and leaving sparse documentation, expanded cinema is a challenging object of historical study. Incorporating characteristics of film, performance, and installation, expanded cinema has rarely been preserved, archived, or even documented. The common route for cinema would be for a work to enter a distribution catalogue and eventually a film archive. In the case of an artwork, the art object would usually be sold or donated to a private collection or a museum collection by the artist or his or her representation (whether a gallery or an estate). While it remains a challenge, performance works have more recently been acquired into collections, together with the necessary instructions, materials, and documentation. Although expanded cinema could enter museum collections in a similar ways, one of the reasons this has been prevented is the lack of resources and experience in handling film material in most art institutions and museums; at the same time, film archives similarly lack the expertise in handling the complexities of performance and installations. Lost in between, expanded cinema from around the world is suffering a crisis of preservation, especially considering that historical works on analogue film are vulnerable to deterioration

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1 Here I acknowledge the work of our colleague Uesaki Sen, ex-archivist at Keio University Art Center, who handled documents related to Sōgetsu Art Center in their archive and was instrumental in setting up the online publication of these ephemera as part of the launch of post (<https://post.at.moma.org/>), the online platform for C-MAP (Contemporary and Modern Art Perspectives), an internal research initiative by the Museum of Modern Art, to which Ann Adachi-Tasch, Hirasawa Go, and I contributed. In his role as archivist and researcher, Uesaki is concerned with the temporality of ephemera, particularly as it pertains to events, and that promotional materials shouldn’t be considered historical evidence of what took place at an event as it was printed prior to it taking place.

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2 This is also a reflection of the Japanese art community in the 1960s and ’70s, where artists participated in critical discourse as editors, writers, and participants of panel discussions that were transcribed and published. For example, Imura Takahiko and Matsumoto Toshio were both on the editorial board of *Kikan Film* [Film quarterly] as well as being regular contributors.

unless kept in the appropriate climate and conditions. Its continual disregard by the industry has meant it often gets devalued and eventually forgotten.

Even when the film material has survived, other challenges await. As works of expanded cinema were mostly conceived for the artist to present it themselves, it is more than often the case that little documentation has been left of the performance. Miyai Rikurō's *Phenomenology of Zeitgeist*, for example, is a case in point. Miyai had let go of most of his belongings when he left for India in 1976, only to return thirty years later to Japan in 2010. As such, very little material on his work as an artist remains intact: luckily, a film print of *Phenomenology of Zeitgeist* had been kept by Katō Yoshihiro, founder of the artist group Zero Jigen [Zero Dimension], presumably as it features the group's street performance as part of the footage. It was through archival research and interviews with the artists that we were able to ascertain the film was part of a multi-projection performance. In such cases, we must rely on the remnants of the event to piece together an impression of the performance: from diagrams and instructions; any materials used in the performance; promotional materials and other ephemera; reviews and reports published at the time or thereafter; photographic documentation; memories of the artist, other participants of the performance and event, and other visitors. We are often lucky to have any of the above accessible to us fifty years later. In this situation where documentation is sparse, texts and articles discussing the broader subject of expanded cinema are instrumental in providing another insight into the works themselves, and the translations of these texts into English not only widens their access but also enables a fuller understanding of where these works came from, ephemeral as they are. As such, we consider these translations to be an extension and contribution to the cataloging work we are doing as Collaborative Cataloging Japan. The following pages will be dedicated to negotiating the terminologies of "intermedia" and "expanded cinema" in the Japanese context

in order to provide an insight into the critical discourse in which they participated and were influenced by.

## Intermedia

Intermedia as a theoretical framework has been increasingly prominent in art and film history across recent years and can be loosely framed as a discourse on interactions between media, or artistic disciplines, that are usually considered separate and in isolation. The approach chimes with the increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary research in academic circles, which often materialize as cross-departmental research projects, and encourages the sharing of analytical tools and knowledge among disciplines. For many years, various terminologies had been used to describe media interactions of a slightly different emphasis, often reflecting on the research discipline from which the writer came from: intertextuality, often used by literary scholars, positioned "texts" to be in dialogue with one another (Kristeva 1967/1980; Lehtonen 2001); interartiality, which described the interrelations between artistic disciplines (Clüver 1996; Greenblatt 1997); and multimediality, often used by media scholars, usually designated the accumulation of multiple media in an artistic presentation. In more recent years, the terms "intermedia" and "intermediality" have caught currency to describe and analyze, broadly speaking, interactions between different media or artistic disciplines. What distinguishes the theoretical framework of intermedia from its predecessors may be that it is used across the academic disciplines of literature (Wolf 2005; Rajewsky 2005), performance (Kattenbelt 2006; Bay-Cheng et al. 2010), cinema (Pethő 2011; Jerslev and Nagib 2013), and film and video (Houwen 2017), appropriately for a term that shouldn't be privileging a medium over another. While it has found increasing relevance in the past two decades, particularly within European academic circles, the notion of "intermedia" has existed since

the 1960s. Most texts hark back to the writing of Dick Higgins, a Fluxus artist, who was active in the New York art community. His essay “Intermedia,” published in 1966 as part of a newsletter for limited circulation for Something Else Press, the small publishing house he found in 1963 for experimental literature, is widely cited as the first to promote the term. Most likely unbeknownst to him, intermedia had traveled beyond language barriers and was enthusiastically picked up by Japanese artists and critics. As demonstrated in the publication of the *Handbook of Intermediality: Literature – Image – Sound – Music* (2015), published as part of De Gruyter’s Handbook of English and American Studies series, the historicization and interpretations of the term more often than not neglects its widespread influence across languages and locally-specific interpretations.

Intermedia arrived into the Japanese critical discourse soon after it was coined by Dick Higgins. The term found its way to Japan relatively quickly despite the geographical distance and language barriers because there was a proximity between the art communities of Japan and the United States and, in particular, Tokyo and New York. Travel abroad increased as the economy stabilized in the postwar years, and increasingly so when the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 abolished the quota system for traveling abroad. Many artists, in their young age, traveled to New York to study and several made the trip through seminar and fellowship programs, such as the International Seminar at Harvard University and the Japan Society Visiting Artist Fellowship.<sup>3</sup> Migration away from Japan and to New York was particularly common among women artists who struggle to get their work recognized in their home country and sought acceptance elsewhere. These artists include Yoko Ono, Yayoi Kusama, Shigeo Kubota, Idemitsu

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3 Iimura Takahiko and artist Kanesaka Kenji first traveled to the United States through their acceptance into the International Seminar at Harvard University. Iimura extended his stay through the Japan Society Visiting Artist Fellowship.

Mako, Shiomi Mieko, and Saitō Takako.<sup>4</sup> The Japanese artists Akiyama Kuniharu, Ay-O, Ichiyanagi Toshi, Kosugi Takehisa, Shigeo Kubota, Yoko Ono, Saitō Takako, Shiomi Mieko, and Tone Yasunao were involved in the international network Fluxus as members and, upon their return to Japan, shared their peers’ works at events such as *Fluxus Week* at Gallery Crystal, Tokyo (September 8, 9, 11, and 14, 1965).<sup>5</sup> Due to their close affiliation with the New York-based Fluxus community, several Japanese artists and critics inherited the term “intermedia,” most likely directly through Higgins. That being said, as far as we can ascertain, the first instance of the use of the term “intermedia” in Japanese print was in an article published in December 1966 and written by Iimura Takahiko, a filmmaker with some affinity with Fluxus through pre-existing relationships he had with Japanese artists before arriving in New York.<sup>6</sup> In the article “Special Report! Seismic Rumbles from the Underground,” Iimura reports on the latest works by artists Stan VanDerBeek, Robert Whitman, and the artist group USCO, as well as his experience visiting a discotheque in San Francisco, for the Japanese film magazine *Eiga Hyōron* [Cinema criticism]. While the journal covered a wider scope of arts beyond cinema, its primary coverage was on cinema, and specifically on experimental film. In the article, Iimura spells the word “intermedia” in its *katakana* rendering three different ways, which indicates there wasn’t yet consensus on how to spell its Japanese iteration, probably as it was the first instance in which it was written for a Japanese readership. He also conflated the

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4 Midori Yoshimoto provides an account of Japanese women artists in New York in her book *Into Performance: Japanese Women Artists in New York* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005). The lack of opportunities in Japan for women artists may also explain the absence of women from Japanese discussions on Intermedia and Expanded Cinema and the fact that there were barely any women artists whose work at the time could be categorized as expanded cinema.

5 The event series was co-organized by Ichiyanagi Toshi, Yamaguchi Katsuhiro and Akiyama Kuniharu and involved performances by Shiomi Mieko, a concert by Ichiyanagi, Akiyama, Takemitsu Tōru, Tone Yasunao and an event by Yamaguchi. The event series also included a film screening, which included a film by Dick Higgins as well as Nam June Paik and Japanese animator Kuri Yōji.

6 Iimura’s films *Ai* (Love, 1962–63) and *Kuzu* (Junk, 1962) include a soundtrack by Yoko Ono and Kosugi Takehisa, respectively. Iimura and Kosugi worked together again later for Iimura’s film *New York Day and Night* (1989).

term “intermedia” with “expanded cinema,” and suggested it was used synonymously (1966/2013). His position as a filmmaker, the publication’s primary remit as a cinema magazine, and Imura’s interpretation of the term, arguably dictated the initial conception of “intermedia” to have a deep relation with cinema, which continued to be prevalent in the discourse on the terms thereon. This can be seen across the three main events that took place between 1967 and 1969 in Tokyo with the use of the word “intermedia” in their title: *Intermedia*, an event series that took place at Lunami Gallery, May 23–28, 1967; Intermedia Art Festival, which took place in the discotheque Killer Joe’s, January 18–19, 1969, and at Nikkei Hall on January 21, 1969; and, finally, *Cross Talk / Intermedia*, which was presented at Yoyogi Gymnasium, February 5–7, 1969.

The first event, *Intermedia*, was co-organized by Satō Jūshin, editor of *Eiga Hyōron*, and the magazine’s contributing writer Ishizaki Kōichirō. While Imura wasn’t involved in the organization of this event series, the fact that his article was published in this journal establishes some affiliation. Ishizaki conceived the event series as a continuation of his film screening series *Lunami Film Gallery*, which he presented four times between January and April 1966, a year prior to the event *Intermedia*.<sup>7</sup> The pamphlet published for this event includes several essays, translated for this book, which sought to define the newly established term “intermedia,” in recognition of the fact that most Japanese audiences would not have understood its meaning in that moment. Works that were presented at this event series were categorized into four sections: fine art; happening; expanded cinema; and cinema. Nevertheless, 18 out of 27 participants presented works that involved film projection, indicating the strong affinity between the Japanese conception of “intermedia” and cinema. The Fluxus affiliation also remained

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<sup>7</sup> In the second part of the series, Jōnouchi Motoharu presented *VAN Document* (1966), which was described as a “Happening-film” on the flyer and involved the artist interrupting the projection of his film with his body and whipping the wall during the projection. Performances such as these would later be described as “intermedia” or “expanded cinema.”

intact through the participation of artists like Tone Yasunao and the projection of *Easily Burnable Ears* (*Moeyasui mimi*, 1963) by Kanesaka Kenji in the form of a happening that incorporated a performance based on the event score *Licking Piece* (1964) by Fluxus founder Benjamin Patterson, wherein the instructions outlined for a woman’s body to be covered with whipped cream. Kanesaka interrupted his own film with this “event,” covering the model Hijiri Chiko, considered to be Japan’s Twiggy at the time, with whipped cream and inviting his audience and other participants to lick it off her.

Intermedia Arts Festival, which took place almost two years later, was similarly indebted to the interpretation of intermedia that derived from Fluxus activities. Organized by Tone Yasunao, a Fluxus member, four out of the five Japanese artists, including Tone, had been temporarily based in New York and had participated in Fluxus. Events by Fluxus artists George Brecht, Jackson Mac Low, Ben Vautier, Tomas Schmit, Nam June Paik, and Dick Higgins were presented as part of the festival by local artists based on their event scores. The infamous photograph of Dick Higgins performing *Danger Music No. 17* (1962) can be seen on the poster design of Intermedia Arts Festival. While the Fluxus events were relatively simple and used sparse equipment, several of the other performances involved electronic media and were works of comparatively larger scale. Shūzō Azuchi Gulliver’s *Cinematic Illumination* (1968–1969), for example, was a work involving eighteen carousel slide projectors synchronized using technology for lighting display. In this work that he made at the young age of nineteen, the projectors were pointed towards all the inner walls of the discotheque and created an immersive environment.<sup>8</sup> Even more inclined toward this direction was *Cross Talk / Intermedia*, an event series co-organized by American composers Karen Reynolds and Roger Reynolds with

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<sup>8</sup> The works presented by Tone Yasunao and Kosugi Takehisa similarly involved electronic media, specifically music, indicating the direction in which their endeavours in music were heading.

Japanese composers Akiyama Kuniharu and Yuasa Jōji. *Cross Talk* was a concert series organized by the Reynoldses through the American Cultural Center to showcase contemporary music from Japan and the United States in a kind of exchange. Sponsored by Pepsi, the free event series brought intermedia into the mainstream and brought to mind the activities of E.A.T., Experiments in Art and Technology, and their event series *9 Evenings: Theater and Engineering* for its ambition and scope, as well as the fact that the electronic companies Sony, Pioneer, and TEAC Corporation were directly involved in the loaning and invention of equipment for the purposes of several performances. The resulting event involved a series of large scale presentations in a gymnasium that was used for the 1964 Summer Olympics, including projections onto large inflatables in the form of *Projection for Icon (Icon no tame no projection, 1969)* by Matsumoto Toshio and *Circles (1969)* by Iimura Takahiko in collaboration with musician Alvin Lucier. In just two years, the scale of the locations in which Intermedia was presented moved from the small confines of a gallery to a sports gymnasium.

In such ways, *Cross Talk / Intermedia* illustrated the shift in interpretation of the term “intermedia” towards a larger scale presentation of multiple media with which it would later become associated. This was by no means a shift that was only taking place in Japan. In the United States, intermedia had come to designate “an offshoot of expanded cinema characterized by all-encompassing, disorienting mass spectacles of multisensorial media collage incorporating architecture, sound, projected light and film, strobes, and sometimes tactile and olfactory stimuli as well” (Harren 2015). The media collective USCO, among other artists, took part in the touring festival Intermedia '68 that characterized the type of intermedia that sought to channel, recreate, and for some of its audience, accompany, drug-induced psychedelic experiences through multisensorial and immersive audiovisual presentations. These works broke away from the traditional approach of keeping the audience at bay from the artwork; rather, brought

audiences in as active participants. While some of the works presented somewhat aligned with this type of standpoint, Intermedia Arts Festival was in part conceived by artist Tone Yasunao as a response to the apolitical spectacle that he saw Intermedia was becoming. Strategically planning the event a few weeks before *Cross Talk / Intermedia*, Tone saw the lack of criticality in the new direction that intermedia was taking as a misinterpretation. In describing his reading of Intermedia, Tone twice invoked his viewing experience of the experimental film *Arnulf Rainer (1960)* by Austrian filmmaker Peter Kubelka. The film is considered canonical in the subgenre of “flicker films” as it is entirely comprised of black and clear film leader that alternates at different rhythms to create a flicker effect. As it hones in on light and shadow as the essential qualities of cinema, and through only film material, the film’s purist approach may appear at odds with the notion of intermedia commonly understood as the fusion between the arts. Nevertheless, Tone considered the ways in which the oscillation between black and clear film leader lit up the screening space to be “Intermedia,” as it established a link between the work, the space, and the audience within it. He referred to this coexistence as *zentaisei* (totality).<sup>9</sup> Rather than a simple interaction between distinct media, Tone felt works of Intermedia, such as those he brought together for Intermedia Arts Festival, invited the body of the audience member or exhibition visitor into the interrelational dynamics. As such, Tone felt art and society to be inextricably linked and saw Intermedia as a political method to highlight this interrelation. Dick Higgins similarly went onto see intermedia as political. As Nathalee Harren describes, Higgins uses more overtly political language in his essay “Statement on Intermedia” (Higgins 1966), his second text on the concept, writing on the “dialectics between the media” and calling for intermedia to go beyond formal questions and assert its social dimension.

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<sup>9</sup> Tone discusses Arnulf Rainer in the context of intermedia (Tone 1967, 104 and 1968, 83). Tone recalled a screening of Arnulf Rainer at Minami Gallery, Tokyo, during the exhibition of Arnulf Rainer’s work in 1962 (Saitō et al. 1970, 66).



Proponents of Intermedia in Japan, in line with Tone's stance, called for an active spectatorship that participated in the shaping of the work. In dance critic Ichikawa Miyabi's point of view, the audience were witnesses to "accidents" in the event of experiencing a work of Intermedia (1969, 70). Proposing that Intermedia resulted in "unforeseen worlds where individual (*ko*) and totality (*zentaisei*) are no longer in contradiction" (1971, 123), Ichikawa, like Tone, considered the audience a part of the interrelational dynamics that come into play in Intermedia. As such, the potential Intermedia had for Ichikawa was the undetermined nature of the outcome in an intermedial event. Rather than a totality that brings together all participating media into one whole, Ichikawa suggested intermedia brought about a "scattered totality (*bara-bara zentaisei*)" (1971, 123), where the individual media remain intact in the process of mixing with others. If the audience members are a component that take part, as Ichikawa suggests, they remain critical observers rather than being insouciantly caught up in total immersion. Ichikawa grew to become frustrated with the Japanese interpretation of intermedia, particularly as it neglected dance, a physical form of expression that is often disregarded in the mass spectacle that Intermedia was becoming in some circles. As such, he turned to the notion of "expanded," which resonated with expanded cinema, and which was similarly rooted in Fluxus through George Maciunas' *Expanded Arts Diagram* (1966). On March 21, 1970, Ichikawa organized the Expanded Art Festival at the Kishi Memorial Gymnasium in Shibuya, Tokyo, where he invited the all-women dance troupe Kuni Chiya Dance Institute (Kuni Chiya Buyō Kenkyūjyo) and the dancers Atsugi Bonjin and Ishii Mitsutake, as well as Iimura, who presented the film performance *Floating* (1970). Iimura's performance involved three projections of black film leader loops onto which projectionists made holes using a hole-puncher until the film snapped. Projecting onto black pneumatic balloons made by artist Ōnishi Seiji, the light shining through the holes appeared as momentary circular flashes in the dark. Leaving the work in the hands of other projectionists

and some serendipity, Iimura decentered himself as an artist and the audience bore witness to what Ichikawa would call an "accident," or, an act of Intermedia.

In part, Ichikawa's interpretations of intermedia were influenced by the time he spent in New York between 1966 and 1968, precisely when intermedia was garnering a lot of attention. Nonetheless, his stance regarding intermedia in that period was informed by the critical discussions on media interaction that took place in Japan prior to the arrival of the terminology in the mid-1960s. In the 1950s, this discussion was characterized by the term *sōgō geijutsu* (synthesis arts, or, total work of art). Indeed, in his short essay published as part of the pamphlet for Lunami Gallery's event series *Intermedia*, critic Ishiko Junzō reminded his readers that the synthesis between commonly separated media, or genres (*gyanru*) as it is often referred to in Japan, had already been a discussion point around *sōgō geijutsu*. Yet, in some ways, Ichikawa and others, including Tone, were positioning themselves and their critical stance on intermedia in relation both to the previous generation and their debates on the and to their American counterparts. In part, Japanese artists and critics saw in intermedia a way to pave a new path in the discussion around media interaction away from *sōgō geijutsu* of the 1950s. According to critic Yoshida Yoshie, the animator Manabe Hiroshi declared he "distrusts" in what he called "half-breed infants" born from *sōgō geijutsu* (Yoshida 1970, 4). The statement, albeit a paraphrased recollection from Yoshida, harks back to a cartoon Manabe drew to accompany his 1960 article "Calculation Time" (*Keisan no jikan*) in *SAC Journal*, the publication of the Sōgetsu Art Center. In this article, he critiqued the idea of synthesis (*sōgō*) with a drawing of two figures with a pair of breasts each, a plus sign between them, and an equal sign after them, revealing a figure with four breasts, suggesting that *sōgō* can lead to deformities and simply juxtaposing media doesn't always lead to productive outcomes. In the same year, Manabe presented his projection experiment *Marine Snow: Animation for the*

*Stage (Marin sunō: Butai no tame no animēshon, 1960)* at Sōgetsu Art Center where his animated film was interrupted by dancers, a Noh performer Kanze Hideo, and live performances of tape music from NHK Radio during the projection. The composition of the work can be seen as a precedent to the works of expanded cinema that emerged later in the same decade. Another early example of expanded cinema is the presentation *Document 6.15* by members of the VAN Film Science Research Center (VAN Eiga Kagaku Kenkyūjo), a collective space set up in 1960 by students and ex-students of the Nihon University Film Study Club, a.k.a. Nichidai Eiken (Nihon Daigaku Eiga Kenkyūkai), including Adachi Masao and Jōnouchi Motoharu. In 1961, the All-Japan League of Student Self-Government (Zengakuren) commissioned VAN to make the film as an ode to student protestor Kanba Michiko who had died during protest activities on June 15, 1960. Described as a precursor to intermedia events by Go Hirasawa (2002, 108), the projection of the film involved other elements, such as tape recordings and slide and light projection, all presented in asynchronous disarray, which was implemented to interrupt what was to be the public announcement to disband Bundo, a strand of Zengakuren, and instead incite the presenters and the attending public into another rally. As such, the political crux of Intermedia to instigate a critical spectatorship and stimulate audiences into participation was achieved to a degree many years prior to the arrival and subsequent discussion of the term. With Adachi, Jōnouchi, and to a lesser extent, Manabe, remaining active artists and critical voices in the Japanese art community of the late 1960s, the political potential they saw in the fusion between different media informed the ways in which Intermedia was discussed later in the decade.

The critical discussions on the terms “intermedia” and “expanded cinema” were somewhat short-lived. By 1970, intermedia became broadly associated with the advanced technology and scale of Expo ’70, the 1970 World Exposition in Osaka, for which many artists involved in the debates on Intermedia and Expanded

Cinema went on to be involved in as commissioned artists. Their decisions caused quite a controversy among the Japanese art community as the event was seen to be wrapped in a nationalist and industrialist agenda, with many historians considering the event to mark an ending for the postwar Japanese avant-garde. Intermedia is broadly considered to have vanished with it. Performance historian KuroDalaiJee suggests that Intermedia became “an apolitical spectacle with more high-tech equipment, grand exhibition spaces and large-scale funding—no longer *angura* or avant-garde” (2010, 82). His evaluation may be somewhat reductive, however, as Intermedia continued to be utilized by artists against Expo ’70 and, at times, after 1970. Expo ’70 Destruction Joint-Struggle Group (Banpaku Hakai Kyōtō-ha), comprised of Zero Jigen [Zero Dimension] group, the film collective 8 Generation, and others, called their first event *8 Generation + Intermedia Show*, presented at Theater 36 in Nagoya, February 22-23, 1969. Nonetheless, the term “intermedia” gradually lost its currency in the Japanese art community, whose interests shifted towards video art and installation, both of which conceptually overlap with Intermedia and Expanded Cinema but in their infancy usually concerned projects smaller in scale and spectacle than the works with which the two terms became associated. Nevertheless, Intermedia and Expanded Cinema, both as critical approach and artistic practice, left an indelible mark in a period of Japanese art history that is broadly considered to be one of its most dynamic moments in the wake of its postwar reemergence. Despite the burgeoning interest in academic and curatorial circles in this period of Japanese art history, the paucity of readily available material in a language other than Japanese has meant the local context, particularly the ways in which the terms were critically debated, was somewhat neglected. The texts selected in this book are ones that deal with Intermedia and Expanded Cinema firsthand. Through these translations, our hope is that Japanese debates on intermedia can contribute to international discourse, and that works of Japanese Expanded Cinema can be preserved, reenacted and analyzed with these discussions in mind.

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