

Introduction: Collectivism in Twentieth-Century Japanese Art with a Focus on Operational Aspects of *Dantai*

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Fusain Society is akin to a railroad on which trains run carrying [its members]. Each member may think his individual thought, but if the train is southbound, those aboard all move southbound together. Participants of the [government salon] *Bunten* are excluded from Fusain's exhibition, because the southbound train won't carry northbound passengers, and the southbound passenger won't board the northbound train. — Saitō Yori

Certainly, at that time [around 1960], we staked our whole energy on rewardless [*mushō no*] spectacles. We formed artists' groups, just like we made art works. We almost equated the collective energy to the creative energy. — Akasegawa Genpei

A dream you dream alone
is only a dream
A dream you dream together
is reality
—Yoko Ono

Collectivism is a lively phenomenon in a rapidly globalizing world of contemporary art today. Artists' groups proliferate in many regions of the world, calling into question the modern myth of originality and individualism. These collectives actively explore new possibilities of expression and operation, while aspiring to break down the conventional boundaries that have long conditioned the production of art and its distribution in society. In tandem with this development, the study of collectivism in modernism is being recognized as a relatively new area of investigation within the discipline of art history, as indicated by such publications as *Art Tribes* (2002) and *Collectivism after Modernism* (2007).¹ In North America, they were followed by panels at the College Art Association's annual conference in 2010, "Modernism and Collectivism" and "New Challenges for Art Criticism: Relational Aesthetics, Social Collaborations, and Public Interactivity."²

The global scope of artists' collectives makes the study of collectivism an integral part of "world art history," providing a critical perspective in understanding the distinctive local developments of modernity and postmodernity worldwide. Setting aside transnational precedents such as Fluxus, one may ask a fundamental question: if collectivism is a global phenomenon, how does it differ from one locale to another? Answering this question requires a comparative study predicated upon the examination of a set of more localized questions, which include, in no particular order: What were—and have been—the impetuses and origins of collectivism? How has it evolved in each locale? What is its significance in a specific local and a broader global context? What, if anything, makes each locale's collectivism distinctly its own? What is the potential of artists getting together that individuals cannot achieve under the same circumstances? How did collectivism shape artists' practices of making and showing art in an environment they operate? And finally, how did collectivism itself change over time? This volume focuses on twentieth-century Japan to examine some of these questions.

Seen from outside the discipline of art history, the topic of collectivism, especially the way it is treated in this issue, may seem unusual yet obscure at first glance. Our issue may appear unconventional because it consciously departs from the conventional expectation of art history by focusing less on the work of art (that is, the more formalistic and aesthetic aspect) than on the institutions of art (the more sociological aspect). It should be noted, however, in the recent scholarship, both in Western and non-Western art history, the incorporation of geopolitical, socioeconomic, and other nonartistic investigation has constituted the most exciting development. In particular, the so-called institutional history in modern Japanese art history significantly informs our studies. The issue of collectivism has long presented a proverbial headache even to art historians specializing in Japanese modern art and a void to those outside the discipline, owing to its highly idiosyncratic and closed nature. This has accordingly been a topic touched on by traditional art history in a documentary manner at best; and it has barely figured in Japanese studies, including Anglo-US scholarship of Japanese modernity. Our goal is to engage this vexing yet vital topic with fresh approaches and open a new horizon of discussion by elucidating the intricate workings of collectivism in twentieth-century Japanese art, because art, be it mainstream or vanguard, has played a crucial part in constructing Japanese culture and its modernity. For the convenience of the reader, certain key terms of Japanese art and collectivism are separately listed in an appendix at the end of this introduction.

I would also like to alert the reader that in this volume, literature is cited in a modified manner: if a publication cited has a title listed in more than one language on the title page (or sometimes on the cover, spine, copyright page, etc.), all of them are listed, with Japanese first, followed by English and other language(s), if any, separated by a slash. For example, in my note 10, Saitō Yori's statement, quoted as the first epigraph, is taken from the 1912 catalogue, whose title was given in both Japanese and French: *Dai 1-kai Hyūzan-kai tenrankai mokurokure Exposition de la "Société Fusain" catalogue illustraté du 1912*. Officially given English titles are differentiated from translations provided by authors, which are enclosed in parentheses in this volume, as with the title of Saitō's text, from which this statement is excerpted: "Hyūzan-kai no okori sono hoka" ("The Origin of Fusain Soci-

ety and Other Issues”). Although bilingual titles may not always indicate bilingual publications, it is important to capture the title in all officially given languages so that both Japanese and non-Japanese readers can identify the publication correctly, as officially given English titles routinely appear in library catalogs, including the Japanese CiNii Books.

In This Issue

In the global study of collectivism, Japan presents a particularly challenging case of constructing its local history, for the phenomenal proliferation of artists' collectives makes it at once a “land of collectivism” and a “museum of collectivism.” Japan is a land of collectivism because it has produced literally hundreds of artists' groups since the late nineteenth century, which as a whole constitute a main engine to propel the evolution of its art practices and institutions in the past century. If twentieth-century Japan was a land of collectivism, twenty-first-century Japan is a veritable living museum of collectivism, in which assorted modern modes of collectivism that historically arose can still be found in active operation.

The expansive complexity of the subject necessitates the multifarious investigation of its history. Indeed, the task far exceeds an effort of any single individual. In a collective endeavor to address various aspects of collectivism, this volume began as a panel titled “Collectivism and Its Repercussions in 20th-Century Japan” at the College Art Association's annual conference in Boston in 2006. It was co-organized by Midori Yoshimoto and me — both also serving as the coeditors of this volume — under the auspice of Japan Art History Forum. The five twenty-minute papers at the panel that examined specific collectives formed the basis of this special issue. These articles are informed by and, in turn, inform the latest scholarship in modern and contemporary Japanese art history.

From the prewar period, John Szostak studies the Kokuga Society (or Kokuga Sōsaku Kyōkai in its full Japanese name), the innovators of *Nihonga* (Japanese-style painting) in the Taishō period (1912–26). As typified by Kokuga, the collectivism of *bijutsu dantai* (art associations) frequently centered on annual juried salons, and we are fortunate to have Szostak's contribution, which delineates the working of a *dantai*. Among wartime

collectives, Maki Kaneko looks at three organizations — Army Art Association (Rikugun Bijutsu Kyōkai), the Art Unit for Promoting the Munitions Industry (Gunju Seisan Bijutsu Suishintai), and the Women Artists Service Corps (Joryū Gaka Hōkōtai) — that desired to serve the needs of the nation with their paintbrushes outside the existing art-world order. The art produced during the Pacific War has been a focus of recent scholarship, to which Kaneko adds a collectivist perspective vital to reassessing the new relationship constructed between individual artists and the state. Interestingly, the Art Unit singularly embodied an activist mode of collectivism that was more commonly observed in the looser collectivism of *shūdan* (literally “groups,” with a less formal connotation than *dantai*) that characterized the postwar decades.

Among the postwar *shūdan*, Jikken Kōbō/Experimental Workshop in Tokyo and Gutai (Gutai Bijutsu Kyōkai) in the Osaka-Kōbe region are studied by Miwako Tezuka and Ming Tiampo, respectively. These two collectives pioneered postwar vanguardism that emerged in the 1950s to pursue expressions outside the convention of painting and sculpture. The name Jikken Kōbō has been widely known outside Japan, but little about its work has been known because of the paucity of literature on it in Western languages. Tezuka’s in-depth study of the group in the context of the occupation legacy allows us to understand how its collaborative projects that prefigured intermedia art in the late 1960s became possible. In contrast, although Gutai is well known outside Japan for its radical experimentalism, the group’s internal working as a collective has barely been touched on by Gutai scholars in Japan. Tiampo’s analysis of “individualism within collectivism” demonstrates Gutai’s effort to transcend modernism not just in the members’ exploration of the new possibility of painting but also in the group’s collectivist operations. The deviation from the convention of painting and sculpture as well as the exhibition activities, pioneered by Gutai and Jikken Kōbō, was brought to the extreme by Zero Dimension (Zero Jigen), a 1960s collective studied by KuroDalaiJee (Kuroda Raiji), an art historian based in Fukuoka, Japan. KuroDalaiJee’s work constitutes a series of studies he has conducted in the area of Anti-Art (*Han-geijutsu*), some of which have been published in English.³ A particular focus given here is Zero Dimension’s politically inflected coalition against *Expo ’70* (*The Japan World Exposit-*

tion) in Osaka. With an increasing scholarly interest in the official aspects of *Expo '70* in the history of art, design, and architecture, KuroDalaiJee's examination of the anti-*Expo* movement reminds us how multilayered 1960s Japan was.

These focused studies of important collectives are augmented by two inquiries that attempt to untangle the intricate relationship between individuality and collectivity. Alicia Volk, who has studied the art of Yorozu Tetsugorō, a modernist painter in the Taishō, offers a cross-sectional view of the art world in his time, when collectivism saw a new development following the institution in 1907 of the government-sponsored annual salon *Bunten*, short for the Ministry of Education Art Exhibition (Monbushō Bijutsu Tenrankai). Her study is a testament to the difficulty of studying collectivism as a macrohistory, as opposed to narrating a microhistory centering on an individual artist or even a single group. Her courageous undertaking here is particularly welcome, with her focus on the years around the beginning of the *Bunten*, as the first iteration of the government salon (*kanten*), which in effect marks the beginning of twentieth-century collectivism. By pointing to some characteristics of modern *dantai* collectivism that would cast a long shadow in its history, her commentary has been inspiring to my introduction, which includes my own observations on *dantai* collectivism. In a methodology inverse to Volk's, Midori Yoshimoto contributes an oral history that adds an individual member's perspective on collectivism from within. The subject of her interview is Tabé Mitsuko, a prominent woman member of Kyūshū-ha (Kyūshū School), a major Anti-Art (*Han-geijutsu*) collective of the 1960s, who shares recollections that illuminate the issues of feminism and regionalism, among other concerns that surround collectivism.

Reconsideration of the Basics of Japanese Collectivism

Taken together, these articles reveal diverse manifestations of artists' collectives spanning from the 1910s to the 1970s. How, then, can we understand them within the trajectory of twentieth-century Japanese art as a whole? One tested method has been to give genealogical diagrams of groups that incorporate their continuations and successions, splintering and merging,

with textual narratives to accompany them (see Volk, figure 1, 446). The usefulness of diagrammatic chronologies is undeniable. The whole development from the late nineteenth century to the present may be put in one chronology conveniently equating artists' groups with "art movements" (*bijutsu undō*).⁴ Diagrammatic representation helps delineate a complex series of banding together and disbanding without regard to artistic ideologies: even the most vanguard prewar collectives of the Taishō *shinkō bijutsu* (new art) movement can be put in an organizational matrix to show their eventual demise.⁵ In addition to these diachronic representations, a synchronic complexity can also be devised, for example, as in a mapping of the postwar regional avant-garde.⁶ Useful as these chronologies may be, they are lacking when we try to move beyond an ordered list of groups, for a few reasons. First, the definition of collectivism as "art movements" foregrounds, though rightfully, the stylistic developments, but masks the operational aspects of collectivism. Second, these diagrams saliently encapsulate the additive and cumulative processes of the art world's expansion, but they give little clue to the development of its operational structures (infrastructure), brought about by the public sector's (i.e., government-led) institution building and the private sector's (i.e., nongovernmental) collectivist measures. Third, they carry over, with little critical reevaluation, the earlier ideological framework, including the opposition of *kanten* vs. *zaiya* (literally "being in the wilderness" and meaning "antigovernment salon") that dates back to the time of the early *Bunten*. Fourth, by creating a seemingly seamless timeline, they also obscure the fundamental shift that postwar Japanese art saw, from *kindai* (the modern) to *gendai* (the contemporary), as signified by the decline of the relevance of *dantai* in the working of the art world.

Here I propose to introduce two perspectives: an operational—rather than stylistic—view of collectivism and a consciously twenty-first-century perspective to periodize twentieth-century Japanese art. This is an expansion on the article I contributed to *Collectivism after Modernism*,⁷ which centered on the artistic achievements of vanguard collectives after Hi Red Center in order to highlight the radicalism facilitated by "collaborative collectivism." In that article, I only touched on the "exhibition collectivism" of *dantai*—which I simply characterized as "exhibition societies"—that preceded the postwar explosion of vanguardism. On the one hand, it is quite

possible to entirely skip over a discussion of *dantai* collectivism that represents *kindai bijutsu* (modern art), since in today's art world, *dantai* occupied a domain completely dissociated from the more vanguard and contemporary practices of *gendai bijutsu* and its extension, *kontenporarī āto* (both meaning “contemporary art”). On the other hand, since *gendai bijutsu* emerged as a resistance and critique of *kindai bijutsu*, including the institution of *dantai*, not knowing about *dantai* is tantamount to not knowing about the origin of *gendai bijutsu*. Thus without a fuller account of *dantai*'s collectivism, the study of twentieth-century collectivism is incomplete.

Their domestic significance notwithstanding, *dantai* remain an uneasy topic. It is almost a cliché among critics of *dantai* to say that no Euro-American countries have a similar phenomenon today, let alone in their iterations of modern art. In other words, *dantai* have no analogous body in Euro-American art history. If so, this is a case of that which exists outside the parameters of what art historian Shigemi Inaga calls “admissible homogeneity” in modernism.⁸ My goal in what follows is to examine their locally specific nature so that they can be incorporated into another category proposed by Inaga, “admissible heterogeneity,” to diversify our discussion of multiple modernities.

1. Operational Definition of Collectivism

The definition I propose here is collectivism as “strategic alliances (primarily) of artists motivated to seek and create alternatives to the existing options, be they artistic/expressive or social/operational or both.” The inclusion of the phrase “social/operational” is meant as an express acknowledgment that art does not exist in a vacuum, thus serving as a corrective to the ingrained formalist tendency of the art-historical discipline. Notably, artists' collective operations are closely entwined with their artistic aspirations and practices in their search for alternatives to existing expressive options. For example, when the Kokuga artists pursued their own idea of modernism, the expressive and operational options were combined: to break away from the *Bunten*, which represented a prestigious exhibition opportunity *and* an accepted set of expressive parameters. The wartime collectives sought to marry their

desire to serve the country with their desire to paint, while the government salon was indifferent to the war effort.

Even in the modern period, supposedly dominated by the modernist conception of artists as individuals toiling alone in their private world, that is, making their individual works in their individual studio, the realities of artists' lives were far from static and insular. In a more functional construct, the artist is at once the producer of a work and the first agent to provide it with a channel of “interface” with society by inserting it in the world outside their studios so that it might be exhibited, sold, and collected. Collectivism functions as a means to mediate the relationship between the intrinsic (aesthetic/expressive) and the extrinsic (social) forces. By seeing the artist as an active agent in the art world in particular and society at large, we can add a “down-top” view to the “institutional history” of recent scholarship that focuses on the official/government-led—that is, a top-down—development of *seido* (institutions), such as *kanten*, art schools, and national museums. The study of collectivism from an operational perspective complements this direction, adding a bottom-up dimension to the evolution of the art world through the nongovernmental agency of artists. At the same time, the introduction of an operative view allows room to reassess *dantai* collectivism in a manner more positive and constructive than customarily done. (A pervasively negative view of *dantai*, which is a product of recent history, does not necessarily reflect their historical insignificances, as with the case of the government salon, whose importance has recently been reexamined, as will be seen.)

2. Three Phases of Collectivism: *Kindai*, *Gendai*, *Kontenporarī*

With a consciously twenty-first-century position, Japanese art can be periodized into three evolutionary phases: *kindai bijutsu* (“modern art” in Japanese), *gendai bijutsu* (“contemporary art” in Japanese), and *kontenporarī ūto* (the English term “contemporary art” transliterated in *katakana* syllabary). Roughly corresponding to the general division of the “prewar-wartime” (1907–45), “postwar” (1945–70s), and “recent” (1980s–present) periods, this division differs from the standard Western periodization, be it modern vs.

postmodern art or the more recent formulation of modern vs. contemporary art; or, this periodization does not conform to the emphasis on the avant-garde (*zen'ei*) in Western art history. However, the localized periodization is crucial to understanding twentieth-century art in Japan, as it was informed by the country's place as a latecomer to modernism and a site of alternative modernism. The three phases of *kindai*, *gendai*, and *kontenporarī*, in this context, can respectively be characterized by the mandate of modernization, internationalization, and globalization—each tied to Japan's relationship to the outside world. In the local context, especially important is the paradigmatic shift from *kindai* to *gendai*, accompanied by the formation of both the practice and awareness of *gendai bijutsu* in the 1960s.⁹ This decade was ostensibly the time of finally having caught up with the West, with the sentiment eloquently expressed by the idea of “international contemporaneity” (*kokusaiteki dōjisei*). In retrospect, indeed, during this decade, Japan's radical practices paralleled—sometimes even preceded—the counterparts in Europe, the United States, and other parts of the world, accompanied by sophisticated discourses that articulated the concept of *gendai* and international contemporaneity. Significantly, what is usually regarded as the avant-garde was codified as *gendai bijutsu* toward 1970, with the demise of the concept of *zen'ei* in the Japanese context. By the same token, “keeping up with” and, where possible, “leading” global art is the mentality of *kontenporarī ato*.

Each of these three phases—*kindai*, *gendai*, and *kontenporarī*—saw the rise of a distinct mode of collectivism—roughly speaking, the primarily salon-based *dantai* collectivism, the frequently activity-based *shūdan* collectivism, and the more fluid and more broadly based collectivism of “communities” and “units,” respectively. As will be discussed later, what complicates the story of collectivism in twentieth-century Japanese art is that although these three modes of collectivism typify these three phases, they were not mutually exclusive in each phase but were found concurrently. All the more so, it is important to delineate each in a clear manner: in fact, the operational model and the underlying spirit of three phases are saliently articulated in the three statements quoted to open this introduction.

In the first epigraph, Saitō Yori described his collective of oil painters, Fusain-kai, as a shared vehicle.¹⁰ This captures the attitude of “together but

separate” in the exhibition-based *dantai* collectivism. (*Fusain* is the French word meaning “charcoal.”) Granted, many structured *bijutsu dantai* (art associations) are much more than exhibition societies: they offer such services as study groups; education through *kenkyūjo*, or “research institutes”; and publication, particularly of their journals and organs; they are also a site of networking. Still the ultimate operational *raison d’être* of *dantai* is in retrospect their exhibition programs, both annual juried salons—private-sector counterparts of the *kanzen*—and membership exhibitions. Not all *dantai* hosted juried salons. Startup groups often began with members-only shows and later expanded their programs to include juried salons, as hosting the juried salons requires logistical concerns such as judging a sizable number of submissions from nonmembers in a principled manner and securing a large enough exhibition venue; small vanguard groups tended to focus on membership exhibitions. Either way, the members and nonmember associates who gathered together through exhibitions under the auspice of their group’s banner, be it conservative or progressive, were separate in their individual art making that took place in the isolation of their studios. Saitō’s railroad metaphor of “together but separate” defines the collectivism of *kindai*, while offering an unexpected insight into its nature, as will be seen later.

From the 1950s onward, at the forefront of collectivism, the exhibition-based assemblies that dominated prewar art were overshadowed by activity-based ones, as the collaborative effort of creating unconventional works and activities deviating from the norm of painting and sculpture (including socially motivated art of reportage painting, as well as vanguard attempts in intermedia, installation art, and performance art) became more relevant than—or as important as—that of holding exhibitions.¹¹ In the second epigraph, Akasegawa Genpei’s words eloquently convey the fervor of making collaborative coalitions that spread nationwide, sometimes for the sake of “spectacles,” namely, off-the-wall presentations of nonpainting and non-sculpture.¹² The group Akasegawa mentioned in his recollection, Neo Dada (initially “Neo Dadaism Organizer[s]), staged no collaborative works, like those undertaken by Hi Red Center (another group of his) or Zero Dimension, two canonical collaborative collectives in the mid-decade. However, the Neo Dada members’ intense “partying” at the leader Yoshimura Masunobu’s house, nicknamed “White House of Artists,” amounted to a kind

of art making and was thus part of its collective activities integral to the understanding of its short yet intense one-year history in 1960. In an extreme form, togetherness became in and of itself the goal, if not in practice but in spirit. In contrast to the organizationally minded collectivism of *kindai*, the collectivism of *gendai* — propelled by an almost unharnessed energy — is epitomized by such intense yet fragile “togetherness,” which inspired these artists’ expressions and operations that inseparably informed each other. This collectivist energy played a significant role when Japanese art achieved a breakout moment — the moment of “catching up” with and even surpassing the West. Yet, its institutional and operational legacy requires further investigation, for its fervor for group making apparently did not continue into the 1970s.

Thereafter in the 1980s, with a few exceptions, most notably Dumb Type (est. 1984), collectivism receded from the forefront of advanced art practices. Instead of Gutai and Hi Red Center — or even Mono-ha (Things School) for that matter — which attracted international attention, such individuals as Morimura Yasumasa and Miyajima Tatsuo moved into the global spotlight.¹³ Into the 1990s, artists’ group activities reemerged. Some artists follow the most traditional path of group making, namely, to cultivate camaraderie among peers, as with Shōwa 40 Society (Shōwa 40–nen-kai), founded in 1994 by seven artists born in the fortieth year of the Shōwa era, or 1965, including Aida Makoto and Ozawa Tsuyoshi. In a singularly historically minded manner, Murakami Takashi went back even further in time to revive a premodern artist’s atelier (*kōbō*), when he turned his studio Kaikai Kiki into an incorporated company to run his “art businesses” worldwide. In contrast, his peer, Nara Yoshitomo, has worked in a much looser form of collectivism, collaborating with a design collective named “graf,” to contribute to an effort of area revitalization, or *machi okoshi*, through his *A to Z* project in Aomori Prefecture. Nara’s effort reflects two directions shaping up in today’s Japan: a growing interdisciplinary interest and an ambition to transcend the confines of *gendai bijutsu* as such presented in the museum’s white cube. They are exemplified by, for example, Kyupi Kyupi, founded in 1996 and billed as a “visual and performance unit,” which gives *Kayō Shows*, filled with live singing of older-school Japanese pop songs (*kayō-kyōku*) and Chim ↑ Pom, which gained notoriety in 2009 by hiring an airplane to write

the word *pika* (ピカッ), an onomatopoeia of the atomic bombing in the sky of Hiroshima.¹⁴ The term *unit* (pronounced *yunitto* in Japanese) is as ubiquitous in art as in popular culture, especially music, together with other Japanized terms such as *korabo* (derived from “collaboration”). The most important term in *kontenporarī* collectivism is *komiyunitī* (community) because one favored strategy is a community-based model through which artists pursue collaboration with other artists or even nonartists, typically local residents. With the recent decline of museum and other art-related budgets at every public level, the communal approach shows a growing potential, demonstrated by a number of endeavors, for example, that have enlivened the *Echigo Tsumari Art Triennals* since 2000. These collaborative endeavors, often found outside the white cube of museums, are frequently called *āto purojekuto* or “art projects,” wherein artists often function as “project leaders” who conceive the projects and work with participants.¹⁵

Community-based collectivism clearly extends from the “collaborative collectivism” of the 1960s. It is no surprise, then, that its most prominent practitioner on the global stage is the New York–based Yoko Ono, a veteran of collaborative and participatory projects since the 1960s. In *Imagine Peace*, her renewed peace message after 9/11, she has made extensive use of the Internet (*imaginepeace.com*) as well as older communication technology, to engage an unspecified number of people in the world. Her poetic “instruction” in the last epigraph presciently signals this aesthetic and organizational loosening of collectivism in recent years.¹⁶ In her case, particularly, collaboration is extended to ordinary people in the utopian mode of “separate but together” —that is, those who respond to her instruction may be physically separate but brought together through a shared aspiration and inspiration. What can be called an “imagined community” in Ono’s work (wherein “imagine” being a key word for her in the collaborative legacy with her late husband John Lennon) may not be unusual in modern social movements. But within art, it marks a significant departure from the essentially modernist definition of art as an individualist enterprise based on the ingrained ideal of originality. This endeavor to dismantle the modern connects post-war and recent collectivism, yet differences between the two in terms of institutional and operational contexts are not small.

Observations through the Lens of Salon-Based *Dantai*

Although the history of twentieth-century Japanese art is crucially shaped by collectivism, collectivism alone could not have brought about all the changes. The shift from *kindai* to *gendai* may at first glance seem a logical progression, but it was never a simple story of the former being replaced by the latter but of the two almost concurrently running throughout the century. The fact that the *kindai* mode of collectivism survived to date (in other words, *kindai* operationally coexisted with *gendai*, retaining its place on the art-world stage) is but one factor that complicates the story. A larger working of the whole art world is fueled by the forces of the national and local governments (public sectors), along with those of private sectors (tightly structured *dantai* and other entities such as newspaper companies) as well as less-organized forces (*shūdan* and individuals), all entwined.

One way to untangle this collectivist web is to look at the operational contributions of salon-based *dantai* to the formation of the art-world infrastructure. The sum of the microhistories of individual *dantai* and collectives does not necessarily amount to a macrohistory of the art world, but once a schematic picture is drawn with salon-based *dantai*, further details about other *dantai* and *shūdan* may be mapped out in relation to it. Granted, what follows—a rather quixotic venture—inevitably will remain rough; however, I would welcome both improvements and amendments from scholars of not just *dantai* but Japanese collectivism as a whole.

1. The Expansion of the *Gadan*

One of the fascinating things about salon-based *dantai*—also known as *kōbo* (“open calls”) *dantai*, because they solicit submissions on an unrestricted, that is, “open” basis—is that many of them are still operating today in a very visible manner. This is a fact that is often mentioned parenthetically or hidden in footnotes in scholarly essays on them; it also frequently vexes contemporary critics and historians alike.¹⁷ (Kokuga and Kōdō Bijutsu, discussed by Szostak and Kaneko respectively, are among those long-lived salon-based *dantai*.) Today, in Tokyo, the *dantai* mecca is the National Art Center, Tokyo (NACT), newly opened in 2007: the very first mission of its

exhibition programs is to “offer venues of presentation to nationwide *bijutsu dantai*.” (For the sake of simplicity, *dantai* and salon-based *dantai* are more or less interchangeably used in the following observations.) Housed in a gigantic gleaming building designed by Kurokawa Kishō, it has no mandate to collect works of art. (Its other missions, after hosting *dantai* exhibitions, are to curate its own exhibitions to introduce new tendencies in Japan and abroad and co-organize exhibitions with newspaper companies and other museums.)¹⁸ NACT adds a vast *dantai*-devoted space to the galleries already existing at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, which has been the headquarters of *dantai* salons since it opened in 1926. The inauguration of the national *dantai* facility,¹⁹ long awaited by *dantai*, coincided with the centennial of the *Bunten*, which was celebrated with a special NACT-curated exhibition under the auspice of its postwar reincarnation, Nitten, short for Nihon Bijutsu Tenrankai/Japan Fine Arts Exhibition.²⁰ The yearly lists of *dantai* exhibitions at both NACT and the Tokyo Metropolitan not only demonstrate the continued operational success of *dantai*, whose enduring presence, like it or not, constitutes an undeniable (if unmentionable) part of a wide and pluralist spectrum of cultural production and consumption in twenty-first-century Japan.

Their by-now largely academic and familiar modern styles are perhaps easy to dismiss as being superfluous to art history, but their popularity among and accessibility to the general public merit reconsideration. If their artistic expressions are more aesthetic in a conventional sense than such popular culture as anime and manga that are labeled as lowbrow, then, their place in today’s culture may be understood as “middlebrow,” short of being fully highbrow. Moreover, their popularity may give a clue to the nature of *dantai* when we reexamine them in the evolution of *kindai bijutsu* in Japan. Seldom examined in this context is *dantai*’s operational contribution to the formation of the mainstream art world or the *gadan* (literally “painting platforms”)—in other words, how the art world expanded in a pluralist manner in prewar Japan.

The genealogical diagrams prove useful in visualizing the *gadan*’s overall operational expansion. As Volk rightly points out elsewhere in this volume, the evolution seen in the diagrams is neither successive nor teleological. Instead, it is additive and cumulative. The diagrammatic chronologies

surely reveal certain departures from the *kanten* and some major and stable salon-based *dantai*, such as Nika-kai (Second Section Society) and Nihon Bijutsu-in (Japan Art Academy, shortened as Inten, literally meaning “Academy’s Exhibition”), to just name a few. (Nika-kai and Inten were two major *zaiya* groups, formed soon after the inauguration of the *Bunten*.) However, the key graphic elements are not the name labels, but the connective lines, which not only indicate the evolutionary relationships between these *dantai* but also schematize their life spans, sprouting from the name labels and continuing without interruption, as though they might extend infinitely.²¹ The formation of mainstream art was predicated upon the inauguration of the *Bunten* in 1907 by the Ministry of Education. As art historian Kojima Kaoru illuminated, the significance of the government salon was manifold.²² Above all, in its early years of existence, it managed to establish a national authority for art under the concept of *bijutsu*, which since its introduction in 1873 evolved to mean painting (*kaiga*)—subdivided into *Nihonga* and *yōga*—and sculpture (*chōkoku*), which initially formed three divisions of the government salon. (In 1927, *bijutsu kōgei*, or “art crafts,” was added as the fourth division, while *sōsaku hanga*, or “creative prints,” were accepted as part of *yōga*; calligraphy was not added as the fifth division until 1948.) In view of a rather fragmented art world, it offered (at least as the founding principle) a unified platform. It also served to create a market standard, with “prices” clearly listed in its catalogue and checklist, while the acceptance to show and the awards given boosted not only the prices but also the careers of entrants and awardees. Finally, it facilitated the socialization of art and its display through exhibitions, its popularity demonstrated by the impressive admission figures of, for instance, 43,741, 161,795, and 231,691 visitors for the first (1907), sixth (1912), and tenth year (1916), respectively.²³

Artists’ organizations existed long before 1907. However, as art historian Ōkuma Toshiyuki demonstrates, in the Meiji 20s (1887–96), new groups were formed not so much against the status quo as against “imagined enemy forces”: The Japan Art Association (Nihon Bijutsu Kyōkai) was antagonistic to the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō); the Meiji Art Association (Meiji Bijutsu-kai) solely consisting of *yōga* practitioners, vying against *Nihonga* as a whole; and the so-called New School (*Shinpa*) of *Nihonga* gathered around the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, countering the

Imperial Artists System centering on the Japan Art Association.²⁴ Ōkuma sees the archetype of salon-based (*kōbo*) *dantai* in the Japan Art Association, which enhanced its authority and members' social standing through the salon system in which its members exercised absolute control over the selection of nonmember submissions.²⁵

After 1907, the parameters of the contest changed with the successful *Bunten* at the putative center, for and against which alliances were organized. Whereas Saitō Yori's statement clearly articulated the idea of anti-*Bunten* ("we" on the southbound train vs. "they" on the northbound train) in the *yōga* field, the similarly young Kokuga artists, in the *Nihonga* field, merely spoke the generalized denial of the *kikō* (literally "system" or "institution") as a generative force of art in their manifesto (as discussed by Szostak), which still tempts us to interpret it as their veiled rejection of the government salon. It is notable that the *Bunten* was a reference point for both a short-lived Fusain (which was reorganized after the second exhibition in 1913 into Sōdosha, whose life span was equally short, from 1915 to 1922) and a long-lasting Kokuga (after the reorganization in 1928, when it lost the founding members).

The word *zaiya*, literally "being in the wilderness," encapsulated this spirit of anti-*kanten*. Ōkuma observed that despite many *dantai* separatists' *zaiya* credo, their hidden agenda was to form some sort of "academy," while modeling their exhibition operations on that of the government salon complete with a jury panel to judge submitted works and award prizes; the emulation of the salon system was so pervasive that even such avant-garde *dantai* as Bijutsu Bunka Kyōkai (Art Culture Association) in the 1930s stuck to the salon format, reluctant to follow the French precedent of the independent exhibition, the freest exhibition format of all.²⁶ Thus in Ōkuma's opinion, not only is equating the notion of *zaiya* as "anti-*kanten*" problematic, but no *zaiya* group in the truest sense ever existed.²⁷ Still, historians may question the intention of *dantai* to become academies, because the *zaiya* principle was by no means a mere ideological posturing, since it *did* effect organizational cohesiveness, helping certain *dantai* to stay together vis-à-vis the *kanten*, as well as other *dantai* and breakaway groups.

For example, the prewar history of Nika, as vividly narrated by art critic Taki Teizō, reveals a series of *dantai* intrigues, ranging from how to pacify

the younger *kaiyū* (associate members, a rank below the full membership of *kaiin*) who wanted more privileges (in particular, seats on the jury panel) to the behind-the-scenes conflicts and maneuvers prior to the breakaway incidents, of which it had more than a handful. Artistic differences aside, the rallying point was the issue of “mutual exclusivity” among *dantai* as much as that of *zaiya* separatism.²⁸ Operationally speaking, the net result of all these anecdotes was the organizational stability that allowed the branding of the Nika name *and* a gradual stylistic progression that resulted in pluralism.²⁹ In a larger context, the organizationally stable *dantai* came to serve as alternative yet viable sites of operation — if not necessarily to form “academies” as such — to supplement, rather than supplant, the *kanten*. In effect, they formed a constellation of salon platforms around the center (the *kanten*). This constellation was in effect the foundation of Japan’s mainstream art world, the *gadan*.

2. Bijutsu Dantai as “Intermediates” (*Chūkan Dantai*)

The role of salon-based *dantai* in the prewar years may be compared to that of various *chūkan dantai* (literally “intermediate organizations”), a type of free and voluntary association formed “in between” (i.e., *chūkan*) the state and the individual. Their places in politics, the economy, and the media and intelligentsia have been the object of recent study to understand the formation of democracy in the interwar years. While the workings of *dantai* in the sphere of art differed from those of political parties or trade unions in their respective domains, the historical circumstances they found themselves in were not dissimilar in that the systems of each field were still nascent. (These systems include the decentralization of power from the national government to the local governments; the formation of *zaikai*, the financial world; and the emergence of labor unions, among other social voluntary associations.) Situated between the state and the individual, *chūkan dantai* made vital contributions to the advancement of these systems by “transforming each member’s interests into something more public-oriented (*kōkyō-sei ni najimu*).”³⁰

Thus understood, *bijutsu dantai* played a role similar to political and economic *chūkan dantai*: they furthered the infrastructure building of the

art world after the state-led efforts of the Meiji era, which began with the introduction of the word *bijutsu* in 1873 and culminated with the inauguration of the *Bunten* in 1907. They did so by hosting salons in emulation of the government salon. In essence, they performed tasks that would later be shouldered by professionals: at their salons, artists evaluated and validated other artists' works (the role of art criticism), displayed them (that of the art museums/galleries), and sold them (that of art dealers/galleries), compensating for the absence of professionals devoted to these specialized tasks. They performed the same functions as the *kanten*, but, in aggregation, *dantai* did them on a much larger scale than the *kanten* alone could have possibly done. The problematics and limitations of artists' performing these tasks are obvious, as they were ultimately invested in self-propagation, furthering the careers of followers who imitated them (which has been perhaps the most egregious sin of *dantai* art). In prewar Japan, however, when Japanese artists were negotiating their ways through the formation of modernity, the self-interest of *dantai* overlapped with a broader "publicly oriented" interest of acclimating modern art practices in Japanese society, which would in turn strengthen the popular support of that art.

Seen in the context of prewar *chūkkan dantai*, the organizational endurance of major *dantai* can thus be reassessed as not just securing members' self-interest of having exhibition opportunities and enhancing their own social status but also, though after the fact, serving certain public interests. As seen in Kokuga's attempt to continue the organization despite economic difficulty after the Great Kantō Earthquake, it is not easy to maintain the collective's viability, because its primary activity—to host salon exhibitions—incurred sizable expenses. Just breaking even necessitated the willingness of nonmember artists (who paid entry fees) to participate and the favorable reactions of the audiences (who paid admission fees). Quite aside from *dantai*'s artistic achievements, these two interests had a mutually reinforcing effect. In fact, Saitō Yori's metaphor of railroad contains an unexpected—and most likely unintended—truth to the operational aspect of *dantai*: as with the railroad, the infrastructure of salon-based *dantai*, once installed, could continue to operate as long as there were passengers (both artists and audiences) eager to get onboard.

Granted, organizational longevity often proves to be detrimental to artis-

tic achievement, with the risk of creative complacency, anachronism, and stagnation. But their longevity also served public interests. The stability also had another merit: offering the audience a slow and long exposure to modernism. While constant newness might represent artistic advances, it could be confusing to audiences not acclimated to Western-imported modern art. Because major *dantai* of *yōga* in particular represented a variety of modern styles, ranging from academic naturalism to Impressionism to Surrealism to abstraction, the pluralism of expressions, often reinterpreted and Japanized, allowed the audience to see each of them in a prolonged manner, rather than as a series of quickly changing stylistic fashions. If the general taste, understanding, and knowledge of modern art grew slowly, that was the time necessary for it to take root in Japanese soil where it admittedly lacked a centuries-long tradition of oil painting. In a way, it is possible, following art historian Kitazawa Noriaki who called the *Bunten* an “invisible museum,”³¹ to consider the whole constellation of *dantai* salons another invisible museum.

The need for acclimation of modern art practices was not limited to the part of audiences but also extended to would-be artists. So long as education is concerned, stable *dantai* long provided a valuable training ground to emerging artists, in addition to the teaching facilities, or *kenkyūjo*. Into the early postwar years, a number of vanguard artists still came out of *dantai*. For example, at Gutai, the leader Yoshihara Jirō was a prewar Nika member, while some founding and early members began their careers by showing in *dantai* salons. To just name a few, Masanobu Masatoshi at Kokuga; Shimamoto Shōzō at Modern Art Association (Modan Āto Kyōkai); and Kanayama Akira, Shiraga Kazuo, and Murakami Saburo at Shin Seisaku (New Production) Association, where they met and subsequently formed a small *shūdan*, Zero-kai (Zero Society), before joining Gutai.

The popularization (*taishūka*) of *bijutsu* through *dantai*'s stable presence is part of the larger popularization of culture in prewar Japan.³² The audience attendance is helpful to quantify the popularity of *dantai*, as demonstrated by Szostak's comparison of the attendance numbers of Kokuga vis-à-vis the *Bunten*. The attendance numbers are also an indispensable component of art historian Omuka Toshiharu's study of the formation of the art audience at the expositions (*hakurankai*) and exhibitions (*tenrankai*).³³ In the

immediate postwar years, their popularity may be inferred from the very fact that both the *kanten* and many *dantai* managed to quickly reconstitute and revive their salons, following the suspension of their activities in the war's final years. Herein, the members' self-interest and the craving for everything cultural among the populace at this materially bleak period coincided. Interestingly, asked about the future of the Nitten in 1948, Ishii Hakutei—a founding member of Nika who quit to become a member of the Imperial Art Academy in 1935—pointed out that any exhibition would require both participating artists and audiences, but he had heard little in favor of the salon's abolishment from the latter.³⁴ Furthermore, despite the expressed doubt about the validity of the *dantai* system, newspaper companies endeavored to reorganize and democratize the *dantai*-based *gadan* by attempting to devise a united front: while Mainichi successfully instituted a joint exhibition (*rengō-ten*) of *dantai* in 1947, Asahi tried a general survey (*sōgō-ten*) of contemporary (read, “today's” in this context) art in the same year and settled with a survey of “selected excellent works” (*senbatsu shūsaku-ten*) in 1950. (Newspaper companies were another form of *chūkān dantai* that emerged as a central cultural force of postwar Japan, following their wartime exhibition projects to promote war-related art.) This effort to democratize *dantai* must have been motivated by a desire to take advantage of the existing system, rather than creating a new system altogether, and to avoid confronting *dantai*'s pervasive presence, influence, and popularity.

Interestingly, one such exhibition is referenced in popular culture: Ozu Yasujiro's film, *Late Spring* (*Banshun*) of 1949, about a father and an unmarried daughter Noriko (played by Hara Setsuko). On one of her outings to Tokyo, she and her father's friend Onodera spot a poster for *The 3rd Art Organizations' Joint Exhibition* (*Dai 3-kai bijutsu dantai rengō-ten*), which is held in Ueno at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in May that year, sponsored by the Mainichi newspaper company. Upon Noriko's remark, “I haven't been to Ueno for a long time,” they decide to visit the exhibition. In the film, the museum's characteristic neoclassical entrance was shown, but no inside shot is included, as if the idea of equating Ueno, the museum, and *dantai* art would have been sufficient for the film's narrative to express the engagement with art. It is notable that this is one of several cultural activities Noriko is shown engaged in as a young woman in her twenties of the

upper middle class. In other words, going to a *dantai* exhibition at Ueno was as respectable a pastime for her as reading a pocketbook on the train to and from Tokyo; taking tea-ceremony lessons (with an aunt); attending a Noh play (with father); going to a modern café (with a male friend); and entertaining the idea of attending a violin concert (when the above male friend offered a ticket, and a concert scene was shown with him looking at an empty seat next to him).³⁵

3. Regional Salons

Regional juried salons—*kenten* (literally “prefecture exhibitions”) and *shiten* (“city exhibitions”)—also contributed to expand the base of the art-world infrastructure at local levels. Generally replicating the *kanten* model, many *kenten* and *shiten* were organized by local governments, especially through the boards of education; the involvement of inter-*dantai* artists’ associations (*bijutsu kyōkai* or *bijutsuka kyōkai*) that in principle cut across *dantai* affiliations is also common, sometimes working with the local governments. Local newspaper companies were another player in regional salons. In these respects, regional salons could not have been possible without *chūkan dantai* to create common platforms away from the platforms in the capital, Tokyo.

A few local salons already existed before 1945, including the Kahokuten in Miyagi, and *kenten* in Kagawa and Ōita, located in the Tōhoku, Shikoku, and Kyūshū regions. However, postwar Japan saw many more *kenten* and *shiten* instituted nationwide, frequently with the instigations of evacuee-artists who wanted to have exhibition opportunities in the midst of postwar difficulty. The case of the Fukuoka *kenten*, for example, whose first postwar exhibition held in 1949 was billed as the fifth *kenten*, indicates the birth of a local salon in the complex web of historical circumstances.³⁶ In Hokkaidō, where the Dōten (short for Hokkaidō-ten) was inaugurated by the Hokkaidō Art Association (Hokkaidō Bijutsu Kyōkai) in 1925, two new intra-prefectural salons were created in reflection of the desire for local alternatives: the Zen-Dōten (All Dōten), founded in 1945, began as a forum of evacuee-artists, whereas the Shin Dōten (New Dōten), founded in 1956, was intended to embrace abstraction and contemporary art.³⁷ An index to the ubiquity of regional salons in postwar Japan can be found in a huge survey

exhibition, *Selections from Kenten* (*Kenten senbatsu-ten*), first organized by the Ministry of Education in 1962 and annualized thereafter.³⁸ According to its lists of participation, most prefectures had *kenten* or prefecture-wide equivalents, with rare exceptions being three central prefectures—Tokyo, Osaka, and Aichi.³⁹

Both *kenten* and *shiten* became entry points to the art world for younger artists of the areas, while it also encouraged amateurs to participate. Anecdotes indicate that *shiten* tended to be less mired in the *gadan* politics than *kenten*, the former being smaller entities than the latter. Among the city salons, the most famous is one in Ashiya, the birthplace of Gutai. The *Ashiya City Exhibition* (*Ashiya shiten*), begun in 1948 and continued to date, expressly noted the principle, “Anybody can submit works as they please (*zuii ni*)” in its exhibition guidelines from the beginning.⁴⁰ Yoshihara Jirō, who was central in founding the Ashiya City Art Association that hosted the city salon, advocated a very progressive selection standard and sometimes single-handedly reinstated certain off-the-wall works rejected by other judges (most notably a series of fabric works of 1955 by Tanaka Atsuko, a Gutai member).⁴¹ The city salon’s embrace of amateurs is saliently shown when in 1954, at the seventh exhibition, the youngest among those whose works were accepted for display was a twelve-year-old.⁴² (Ashiya is also known for an annual exhibition of children’s works called *Dōbi-ten*, also hosted by the city art association since 1948.) A range of media practiced by participants—including crafts and hobbies, such as doll making and wax dying (*rōketsu-zome*)—indicates another aspect of the city salon’s populism, although the spirit of modernism espoused by Yoshihara defined the other end of the broad spectrum of selected works.⁴³ Amateurs were also favored at the *Selections from Kenten* exhibition, for which the prefectural boards of education made selections: a Ministry of Education official openly defended the amateur-oriented selections, when one of the award nominees in 1962 turned out to be a kindergarten teacher.⁴⁴

In some prefectures, *kenten* were likely territories dominated by bosses of the local art scenes and laden with factionalism and cronyism. A small collective, Rozo-gun (Rozo Group) of Ibaraki prefecture proclaimed themselves “anti-*kenten*,” accusing Ibaraki’s *kenten* of being “anachronistic” and “outside the legitimate progress of history.”⁴⁵ Kyūshū-ha, too, targeted the

Fukuoka *kenten* as part of its enemy list, as discussed by Tabe Mitsuko in her interview by Yoshimoto in this volume. In this respect, the nationwide spread of regional salons paralleled, even prompted, the regionalization of the avant-garde through collectivism, with the former serving as the local status quo for the latter to reject.

Characteristically, the most frequently proposed countermeasure was an independent exhibition that would dispose of the jury systems (as jurors' seniority routinely translated into conservative selections), thus ending its far from transparent selection process, together with the jury-exempt (*mu-kansa*) status that bred favoritism and artistic stagnation. (At a given salon, depending on the regulations, a nonmember artist who earns a certain number of acceptances, or *nyūsen*, may gain a privilege to show a work[s] without going through the jury panel.) It was almost an article of faith that the ills of juried salons—or *kōbo-dantai ten*—at any level, national or regional or organizational, should be cured by the introduction of the “independent exhibitions” system that eschews the jury selection and the awarding of prizes.⁴⁶ Kyūshū-ha precisely made such an attempt by mounting the *Kyūshū Independent Exhibition* in 1958 and 1959. This was part of the first wave of local independent exhibitions that spawned postwar Japan, which included those in Hokkaidō (1946–67), Himeji (1953–65), and Kyoto (1955–90).⁴⁷ As will be seen, the expectation for the independent exhibition was high and widespread, because the problems that plagued some *kenten* were nothing new: the membership of the jury panel, its selection criteria, the privileges of acceptances, awards, and jury-exempt statuses could be found in practically any juried salons.

4. *Dantai* vs. Professionalization of the Art World

In sum, in the history of *dantai* we recognize at least two vectors of evolution: one entails the stylistic advances and the other entails the formation of the art world itself as well as the expansion of bases of production (including amateurs) and consumption. If we consider how the infrastructure of the art world was built over the past century, professionalization was an eventual direction. By professionalization, I mean the rise of art-related professions such as art critics (who evaluate and validate works of art), art dealers (who

sell works of art), and museum curators (who collect works of art and curate exhibitions for their museums).⁴⁸ Among these three professions, while the first two gradually arose in the prewar years,⁴⁹ the last did not appear for modern art until after 1945. (Aside from the Ōhara Museum of Art, the first private museum intended for *Western* modern art, which was opened in 1930, the first public museum of modern art that expressly encompasses *Japanese* modern art was the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura, opened in 1951.)

It is notable that through the *kanten* and *dantai*, artists practically performed those professional duties, thus filling the still vast void of art-world professionalization.⁵⁰ To reiterate, at their salons, artists as the (self-) appointed jurors evaluated (i.e., to select [*kansa*] works accepted for display [*nyūsen*]) and validated (i.e., to further judge [*shinsa*] accepted works for awards) other artists' works. Just like at the *kanten*, the works thus selected and put on display at *dantai* salons were generally available for sale, with the *dantai* taking handling fees as part of their exhibition incomes. (This was true even with Fusain's exhibitions, whose catalogues included the prices.) What must not be forgotten is that major *dantai* in effect organized "museum-venued" exhibitions by hosting their salons at the space called *bijutsukan*, after Tokyo-fu Bijutsukan (Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum) was inaugurated in 1926 in Ueno Park.⁵¹ In fact, the institution of this museum was closely tied to the proliferation of *dantai* collectivism and the identification of *bijutsu dantai* as exhibition societies to host *kōbo* exhibitions. This last point is an intriguing intersection of the histories of art institutions and *dantai* collectivism, which has cast a long shadow into the twenty-first century.

Important to remember here is that the word *bijutsukan* in Japanese historically signifies two different kinds of facilities. One is "art pavilions" or "exhibition halls," either temporary or for hire, in which works of art are displayed, and the other, "art museums," which are charged to collect and display works of art. In the former *bijutsukan*, the third parties more often than not bring in exhibitions (typically, but not limited to, *dantai* salons), whereas in the latter, the *bijutsukan* curators are expected to (co-)organize and curate special exhibitions in addition to mounting collection displays. The pavilion-*bijutsukan* originated in a temporary space built in Ueno Park

in 1877 on the occasion of the first *Domestic Industrial Exposition* (*Naiōoku kangyō hakurankai*). The first *Bunten* was housed at the *bijutsukan* used for the *Tokyo Industrial Exposition* held prior to it in the same year. Until 1926, the *Bunten* used, as its main venue, the Takenodai Display Hall, a *chin-retsukan* (“display hall” or “exhibition hall”) of the third *Domestic Industrial Exposition* of 1890, which was since managed by the Imperial Museum (Teishitsu Hakubutsukan) and frequently used by *dantai*,⁵² since the Meiji Art Society (Meiji Bijutsu-kai) had first secured a contract to use it for its exhibition in 1892.⁵³ Thus the construction of Tokyo-fu Bijutsukan, thanks to private donations, as a permanent facility for art exhibitions was a major event for *dantai* (although the *bijutsukan* organized a few exhibitions of its own).⁵⁴ It was not until 1975, however, when a new building was constructed for Tokyo-to Bijutsukan that this *bijutsukan* acquired a museological mission to collect works of art and curate its own exhibitions.⁵⁵ At this time, the institution also gained its official English name of Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. (Before then, it had no official English name.⁵⁶) It performed the dual duties of *bijutsukan*, as “exhibition halls” for hire and “art museum,” until 1995 when the latter function was removed from it and transferred, together with its collections and art library, to the newly built Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (Tokyo-to Gendai Bijutsukan). Notably, NACT, or National Art Center, Tokyo, whose primary mission is to host *dantai* salons but is also charged to curate its own exhibitions, is called in Japanese “Kokuritsu Shin Bijutsukan,” literally “National New Art Museum,” betraying the historical and linguistic origin of *bijutsukan* as exhibition halls for hire.

With the postwar tide of professionalization and internationalization of the art world, *dantai* dropped the sales aspect of their operations altogether.⁵⁷ However, they retained the prerogative of evaluating and validating participants’ works as an essential part of their exhibition activities. Their *bijutsukan*-venued salons, too, continued at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. However, the professionalization of *bijutsukan* progressed, with the construction of museum-*bijutsukan*, such as the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura (opened 1951), the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (opened 1952), and the National Museum of Modern Art (opened initially as Kyoto Annex of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, in 1963 and

gaining the present name in 1967). Accordingly, the demand for local art museums arose, in part from the desire to hold regional salons at *bijutsukan*. (The modern museum at Kamakura was a curious case in that such local demand for “exhibition halls”—*bijutsukan* was translated into the erection of a “museum”—*bijutsukan*.⁵⁸) The construction boom of regional *bijutsukan* at prefectural, as well as municipal, levels would begin in 1970 with the inauguration of the Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama, and the Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Kōbe. These new regional facilities are museum-*bijutsukan*, but some of them offer their spaces as “exhibition halls,” thus to varying degrees, maintaining the tie to *dantai* collectivism.⁵⁹

On the one hand, *dantai*'s prerogative to evaluate and validate works by members and other participants helped to ensure their organizational stability—which translated into a secure environment—and to some extent served the purpose of quality control, especially when they were actively expanding the base of artistic production and consumption in the prewar years. However, *dantai*'s self-jury system also created a closed environment, not unlike the *iemoto* system, which tended to uphold the status quo and eschew the new, which was detrimental to forward-looking creativity.⁶⁰ That is to say, in postwar Japan, *dantai*'s operational model, once it served its purposes, was beginning to show the declines of its artistic efficacy.

Gendai Bijutsu and the Decline of the Gadan

“A work of art is made by the artist himself, not by the *kikō* (system or institution).”⁶¹ This statement, echoing Kokuga's manifesto in 1918, was made close to half a century later, during the controversy over the Ministry of Education's effort to mount the *Selections from Kenten* exhibition in 1962. (Many suspected that the ministry's ulterior motive was to recreate a *kanten* of sort.) Indeed, works of art have always been made by artists who may or may not work within the *kikō* of mainstream art and salon-based—thus highly structured and long-lived—*bijutsu dantai*. Shifting our eye outside the *kikō*, we find less structured and generally short-lived *bijutsu dantai* and *shūdan*, which we place customarily in the column of the so-called avant-garde or *gendai bijutsu*. Although *shūdan* is more of a postwar terminology, there are dozens of prewar collectives, a majority of them not found in the

dantai genealogical diagrams, which we may also call *shūdan*. They are the veritable “pioneers of *gendai bijutsu*,”⁶² ranging from Mavo and other groups of the Taishō *shinkō bijutsu* movement to such “young artists’ groups” of prewar Shōwa as Nova Art Association and Kokushoku Yōga-ten (Black Yōga Exhibition).⁶³ In light of their operations and artistic progressiveness, collectives that anticipated *gendai bijutsu* were already beginning in prewar Japan, if only at the margins of the stable salon platform of *kindai bijutsu*.

If so, how did *shūdan* and *gendai bijutsu* come to the fore in the whole landscape of Japanese art in postwar Japan? Aside from the artistic experiments and innovations brought to art history by vanguard practitioners—especially a host of collectives such as Gutai, Zero Dimension, and others—what were the operational contributions of *shūdan* in the formation of *gendai bijutsu* as a distinct area of practice? Although Akasegawa Genpei’s enthusiastic characterization (i.e., founding a collective is as creative as making a work of art) is extreme, maintaining organizational stability seems to have been secondary to these collectives. In comparison to the salon-based *dantai* instrumental in the formation of mainstream art infrastructure, vanguard *shūdan* left little lasting legacy of infrastructure building, although they certainly benefitted from the increasing professionalization of the art world as well as the decline of the *gadan* and the erosion of *dantai* influence.

Although the “rebirth” (*saisei*) of *dantai* took place in the immediate postwar years as the government salon and the *dantai* salons quickly regrouped,⁶⁴ their decline was already set in motion. The prewar infrastructure was increasingly under attack. For example, in 1948, an art magazine *Zauhō* (*Treasure on One’s Side*) conducted a questionnaire entitled “What should be done about the *kanzen*?” among critics and artists;⁶⁵ art historian Kojima Kikuo responded by advocating the importance of the solo exhibition (*koten*). Still, a gap between the ideal and the reality was vast: the fact that the solo-exhibition series in the mid-1950s at Takemiya Gallery in Tokyo organized by critic Takiguchi Shūzō was legendary underscores the reality of solo exhibitions for young artists at the time. In order for the solo exhibitions—for that matter, all non-*dantai* exhibitions—to have an impact in the art world, it required the expansion of infrastructure in the 1960s, par-

ticularly at venues offered by an increasing number of *kashi garō*, or “rental galleries,” and art journalism geared toward *gendai bijutsu*.

In this context, the independent exhibition, which was widely believed to be an ideal solution “long awaited in the art world,”⁶⁶ in retrospect requires reconsideration, as it proved to be a bridge from *kindai* to *gendai*, but never a solution in and of itself.⁶⁷ Granted, its high expectations brought about two major endeavors two years apart in postwar Japan, in addition to some local attempts. They were both entitled *Nihon Independent Exhibition*. The first was by an umbrella organization of progressive artists and collectives, Nihon Bijutsu-kai (Japan Art Society; abbreviated as Nichibi), which initially conceived to counter the established salons by organizing a *rengō-ten* (joint exhibition) of *dantai*, but their idea was preempted by the Mainichi newspaper. Nichibi then inaugurated a nonjuried independent exhibition in 1947, only to see Yomiuri using the same title in 1949. (The latter’s title would be changed to *Yomiuri Independent Exhibition* in 1957.) The contrast between the two could not be starker: the endeavor of the rather inept left-leaning organization — whose stated goals encompassed the questioning of artists’ wartime responsibilities, the anti-Nitten movement, and the creation of a democratic art — failed to attract a large number of artists in its first exhibition,⁶⁸ while the capitalist corporation employed its *dantai* connections and the power of its publicity machine to make it a box-office success.⁶⁹

To justify their independent exhibitions, the two organizers invoked the ideal of democracy and democratization of the art world. However, Nichibi defined its program as “antibureaucracy” (*han-kanryōshugi*) and “an exhibition system that unifies all schools and engenders a new school,” signaling its Communist-inflected ambition to create an alternative to rally all art-world elements.⁷⁰ In contrast, Yomiuri’s rhetoric went for a *tabula rasa* approach of “disregard[ing] all the past circumstances” in order to change the art world that was a “complicated and treacherous domain” fraught with “age-old conservatism (*hōkensei*), favoritism, ambitions for successes, and art-world politics.”⁷¹ This difference is telling in light of what came out of the two efforts. Nichibi and leftist artists were mired by the ideological contest of the Communist Party, while seeing some affiliated artists and collectives engaged in

the so-called Reportage Realist movement in the mid-1950s.⁷² The *Yomiuri Independent Exhibition*, which was from the beginning a major publicity affair, became a hotbed of Anti-Art practices toward 1960 and beyond. In brief, if the former in spirit carried over the collectivism of *kindai* (and it has continued to date), the latter in effect opened the door to the collectivism of *gendai* (and was collapsed by the unruly fervor of Anti-Art practitioners).⁷³

Neither Yomiuri's nor Nichibi's independent exhibitions managed to smash the Nitten or *dantai* salons, as they had initially intended.⁷⁴ Still, the influence of *dantai* and the *gadan* was steadily eroded into the 1950s, as another factor was added to the desire for democratization: internationalization. The direct and personal interface with an outside world, especially with Euro-American art, helped put the reality of the *gadan* in perspective. A side-by-side comparison at such international exhibitions as the Venice and Sao Paulo Biennales offered one occasion to reconsider how to show Japanese art abroad.⁷⁵ Most notably, Imaizumi Atsuo, an art critic and official at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, traveled to Paris in 1952 and was shocked to realize how irrelevant the works of Japanese artists appeared on the international stage. As art historian Mitsuda Yuri examined, once back in Japan, Imaizumi presented a biting critique of the Japanese art world, which caused a sensation called the "Imaizumi whirlwind (*senpū*)." His critique culminated with a declaration that in order to "create true modern painting in Japan," they should (1) dismantle or reorganize *dantai*, (2) terminate the Nitten or dissociate it from the Ministry of Education, and (3) stage a biennale-type international exhibition in Japan.⁷⁶ Imaizumi's propositions proved to be more or less prophetic. Although *dantai* were never dismantled, the Nitten was privatized in 1958 as a foundation, thus becoming just another salon-based *dantai*, albeit a very powerful one. A large-scale international exhibition was instituted by the Mainichi newspaper in 1952, restructured from its *rengō-ten* as the biannual *International Art Exhibition, Japan/Nihon kokusai bijutsu-ten*. This led to the 1970 *Tokyo Biennale*, a full-blown international exhibition to demonstrate the international contemporaneity of Japanese *gendai bijutsu* with Euro-American counterparts. To alternate with its international exhibition, Mainichi also devised a biannual domestic program, the *Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan/Gendai Nihon bijutsu-ten*, which in 1968 and 1969 marked the triumph of *gendai*

bijutsu as it took center stage in the art world and replaced the mainstream art of the *gadan*, which was declared to have “collapsed” by then.⁷⁷

However, the decline of the *gadan* was felt as early as 1962, just ten years after the Imaizumi whirlwind, as *dantai* were losing their hold in one area of their operations, which was still strong in the previous decade: discovery and nurture of young artists. In the April 1962 issue of *Bijutsu techō* (*Art Notebook*), a leading magazine of *gendai bijutsu*, a small column noted the loss of *dantai*'s competitive edge at open-call competitions for new talent, such as the fifth Shell Art Award, the first Maruzen Petroleum's Art Encouragement Award, and the second *International Young Artists Exhibition/Kokusai seinen bijutsuka-ten*.⁷⁸ A reporter observed very few names affiliated with salon-based *dantai* in the lists of awardees, from the grand prizes to honorable mentions, who were mostly “nameless” non-*gadan* artists. The top awards went to, in the order of the competitions mentioned above, Shimomura Ryōnosuke of Panreal (an experimental *Nihonga* collective), Baba Akira (a painter also known as the discriminating manager of the rental Satō Gallery), and Kudō Tetsumi (a *Yomiuri Independent* participant and associate of Neo Dada). This was significant because *dantai* affiliates lost to non-*dantai* artists on artistic merit in competitions that were either prestigious (Shell being known as the *tōryūmon* [gateway] into the *gadan*) or that carried huge money prizes (Maruzen and International Young Artists, respectively, awarding grand prizes of one million yen, or approximately US\$2,800 dollars and US\$1,500 dollars, to study abroad). At the same time, as the reporter commented, young artists by then expected little from salon-based *dantai*, in which established artists judged the works, but preferred *kōbo* competitions, in which evaluations were made by art critics. In other words, this is another manifestation of professionalization of the art world, in which *dantai* lost their relevance.

Coda: From Kindai to Gendai

If the collectivism of salon-based *dantai* had its strength in stability and endurance, which helped the formation of mainstream art of *kindai*, that of *shūdan* had its strength in mobility and flexibility, which was central to many of the collaborative projects and performative activities that charac-

terize *gendai bijutsu*. Although this transitory form of collectivism did not result in an infrastructure as such, it irrefutably contributed, by 1970, to the rise of *gendai bijutsu* as an institution at the most fundamental level—the internalized conception of what constitutes *gendai bijutsu*.⁷⁹ Needless to say, the shift from *kindai* to *gendai* was not limited to art alone; it was a transformation that Japanese society at large experienced during the politically tumultuous and economically expanded 1960s, especially with social collectivism playing a major role in the student movement.⁸⁰ However, in art, the notion of *gendai* was expressly and actively articulated by art critics at the time.⁸¹

Notably, although the influence of the *gadan*—consisting of the Nitten and salon-based *dantai*—waned, the shadow cast by its persistent presence never disappeared. In the late 1960s, after the radical artists' group Bikyōtō put the smashing (*funsai*) of the Nitten on its agenda and staged a direct action at the exhibition site in November 1969, Hikosaka Naoyoshi, one of its ideologues, had to give a critical reflection (*sōkatsu*) as follows: “I feel almost embarrassed to cry out, ‘Smash the Nitten!’ Nothing is more futile and anachronistic. . . . As far as the Nitten’s physical entity is concerned, we have almost transcended its authority, feudalistic nature, and tired old expressions that even a curio shop would pass. But it constitutes our *internal state of art*. That is why we must comprehend our internal Nitten and smash it” (italics by author).⁸²

Ultimately, just as the expressions of *gendai bijutsu* are distinctly different from those of *dantai* and the *gadan*, the territory that the former carved out for itself—the museum-*bijutsukan* and some commercial galleries, as well as art journalism—is separate from that of *dantai* and the *gadan*, although *kindai bijutsu* as the historicized past has been legitimately sited at the museum-*bijutsukan*. Elsewhere, I have outlined how *gendai bijutsu* “stole” the museum during the 1960s,⁸³ but in a worldly sense, if in *kindai*, the era of *dantai*, the artist’s career goal was to become a member of a major *dantai* and show in a *bijutsukan*-venued salon exhibition, in *gendai*, the era of professionalization, their ultimate exhibition will be a museum-organized exhibition (ideally a retrospective).

Yet, it is dangerous to assume that artists became passive producers of

works in this development of professionalization. Undoubtedly, artists proved to be incapable of self-organizing large-scale exhibitions like independent exhibitions. In fact, the second wave of local independent exhibitions arose after the termination of the *Yomiuri Independent* in 1964, and the artist-organized independent exhibitions, which included *Independent Art Festival* (commonly known as *Gifu Independent Exhibition*) in 1965, resulted in some works as memorable as those at Yomiuri's during the time of Anti-Art; yet these independent programs mostly ended up as one-offs.⁸⁴ Still, the independent exhibition was as much a product of nineteenth-century art (in terms of its French origin) as the imported concept of *bijutsu*; the failed independent-exhibition movement in the mid-1960s was part of the localized negotiation of modernity. The institutionalization of *gendai bijutsu* did not free artists from such negotiation, as they continued to operate as the first agents to provide their works with a channel of "interface" with society. Their efforts may not have always taken the form of collectivism, especially thanks to the increase of rental galleries, which served as a Japanese version of alternative spaces. This aspect of *gendai bijutsu*, which forms a fascinating development, goes beyond the present scope of discussion. However, suffice it to say that the artists' prerogative to self-organize was to be renewed in the late 1990s, when the professionalization in the world of *gendai bijutsu* hit a wall with the burst of the economic bubble. Since then, they have once again proved their ingenuity in seeking out operational alternatives, this time breaching the confines of *gendai bijutsu*.

Today, it is much easier to see commonalities in the collectivism in Japan's *kontenporarī āto* and its counterparts in other locales that constitute a globalized art world. Yet, these commonalities merely signify a safe haven of "admissible homogeneity." A challenge still remains for us to explore and articulate dissimilarities in seemingly homogeneous practices. That is a lesson, if any, we can learn in the twenty-first century from (our study of) *dantai* and collectivism of twentieth-century Japan.

Appendix. Key Terms of Japanese Art and Collectivism

<i>Term</i>	Kanji	<i>Definition</i>
<i>bijutsu dantai</i>	美術団体	art associations, frequently centered on annual juried salons; often abbreviated as <i>dantai</i>
<i>bijutsukan</i>	美術館	literally “art pavilions” functioning as “exhibition halls for rent” or “museological facilities” or both
Bunten	文展	the government-sponsored annual salon founded in 1907, short for the Ministry of Education Art Exhibition (Monbushō Bijutsu Tenrankai)
<i>dantai</i>	団体	literally “groups” and short for <i>bijutsu dantai</i>
<i>gadan</i>	画壇	literally “painting platform” and meaning the art establishment
<i>gendai</i>	現代	the contemporary
<i>gendai bijutsu</i>	現代美術	literally “contemporary art”
Inten	院展	literally “Academy’s Exhibition” and shorthand for Nihon Bijutsu-in (Japan Art Academy)
<i>kaimin</i>	会員	full membership of <i>bijutsu dantai</i>
<i>kaiyū</i>	会友	associate membership of <i>bijutsu dantai</i> , a rank below the full membership of <i>kaimin</i>
<i>kanten</i>	官展	official, government-sponsored salon
<i>kenten</i>	県展	prefectural salons
<i>kindai</i>	近代	the modern
<i>kindai bijutsu</i>	近代美術	modern art
<i>kōbo</i>	公募	literally “open call”
<i>kōbo dantai</i>	公募団体	<i>bijutsu dantai</i> that host <i>kōbo-ten</i>
<i>kōbo-ten</i>	公募展	“open call” exhibitions that are usually juried
<i>kontenporarī āto</i>	コンテンポラ リー・アート	contemporary art; more frequently used after the 1990s, as opposed to the older iteration <i>gendai bijutsu</i>
Nitten	日展	short for Nihon Bijutsu Tenrankai/Japan Fine Arts Exhibition; reconstituted from the Bunten
<i>shiten</i>	市展	city salons
<i>shūdan</i>	集団	literally “groups,” with a less formal connotation than <i>dantai</i>
<i>yunitto</i>	ユニット	unit
<i>zaiya</i>	在野	literally “being in the wilderness” and meaning “anti-government salon”
<i>zaiya dantai</i>	在野団体	<i>bijutsu dantai</i> unaffiliated with the <i>kanten</i>

Notes

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All translations from Japanese into English are by the author.

1. Achille Bonito Oliva, ed., *Art Tribes* (Milan: Skira, 2002); and Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette, eds., *Collectivism after Modernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
2. Bridget Alsdorf, chair, “Modernism and Collectivism,” and Kathryn Hixson, chair, “New Challenges for Art Criticism: Relational Aesthetics, Social Collaborations, and Public Interactivity” (panels at *2010 Call for Participation: CAA 98th Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois*, both on February 11, 2010). In the United Kingdom, the 2010 annual conference of the Association of Art Historians included a panel, Robin Baillie and Ken Neil, chairs, “The Rules of (Collective) Art: Interpretation, Social Engagement and Authorship in Contemporary Community-Based Art.”
3. They include Kuroda Raiji (KuroDalaiJee), “Kyūshū-ha as a Movement: Descending to the Undersides of Art” and “A Flash of Neo Dada: Cheerful Destroyers in Tokyo (1993),” in “Art Outside the Box in 1960s Japan,” special issue, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 17 (2005): 12–35 and 51–71, respectively.
4. “Bijutsu undō no nagare” (“Currents of Art Movements”), in *Nihon kindai bijutsu jiten/ Encyclopedia of Modern Japanese Art*, ed. Taki Kōji and Fujieda Teruo (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 2007), 598–603.
5. “Taishōki shinkō bijutsu undō ni okeru dantai no nagare” (“A Flow of Organizations in the Taishō New Art Movement”), in Omuka Toshiharu et al., *Taishōki shinkō bijutsu shiryō shūsei (Documents of Taishō’s New Art Movement)* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2006), n.p.
6. “Nippon rettō: Zen’ei gurūpu gaido mappu” (“Japanese Archipelago: A Guide Map to Vanguard Groups”), *Bijutsu techō*, no. 296 (April 1968).
7. Reiko Tomii, “After the ‘Descent to the Everyday’: Japanese Collectivism from Hi Red Center to The Play, 1964–1973,” in *Collectivism after Modernism*, ed. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 44–75.
8. Shigemi Inaga, “Translation,” in *Art and Globalization*, ed. James Elkins, Alice Kim, and Zhivka Valiavicharska (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 30. I thank Ming Tiampo for relating his concepts with the case of *dantai*.

9. Notably, this prefigures the recent rise of “contemporary art” in the global context. See Reiko Tomii, “‘International Contemporaneity’ in the 1960s: Discursing on Art in Japan and Beyond,” *Japan Review*, no. 21 (2009): 123–47.
10. Saitō Yori, “Hyūzan-kai no okori sono hoka” (“The Origin of Fusain Society and Other Issues”), in *Dai 1-kai Hyūzan-kai tenrankai mokuroku/1re Exposition de la “Société Fusain” catalogue illustraté du 1912*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Fusain-kai, 1912), 2; facsimiled as *Kindai Nihon āto katarogu korekushon 034 (Modern Japan Art Catalogue Collections, vol. 34)* (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2002), 7.
11. Masaki Motoi has conducted a collaborative research project on postwar Japanese vanguard collectives.
12. Akasegawa Genpei, *Imaya akushon aru nomi! “Yomiuri andependan” to yū gensho* (Action Only, Now! The Phenomenon Called the “Yomiuri Independent”)* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1985); reissued as Akasegawa Genpei, *Han-geijutsu anpan (Anti-Art Independent)* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1994), 132.
13. Even though Mono-ha was never “formally” organized as a group or a movement, Lee Ufan, Sekine Nobuo, and other artists who graduated from Tama Art University, who are art-historically codified under the label of Mono-ha, had an extremely close relationship in 1968–72.
14. Taken from the local appellation of the atomic bomb, *piqa don*, the young artists’ group was accused of their insensitivity to the irradiated victims called *hiba-kusha*. See Chim ↑ Pom and Abe Ken’ichi, *Naze Hiroshima no sora o piqa to sasetewa ikenai no ka (Why Must We Not Write Pika in the Sky of Hiroshima?)* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2009).
15. See Kajiji Kenji, “Āto purojekuto to Nihon: Āto no ākitekuchā o kangaeru”/“Art Project and Japan: Examining the Architecture of Art,” in *Hiroshima āto purojekuto 2008/Hiroshima Art Project 2008*, exhibition catalog (Hiroshima: Executive Committee of Hiroshima Art Project, 2009), 129–35/152–61. A list of some ninety community-based art projects can be found at matome.naver.jp/odai/2125436250184937873?page=1&viewCode=SP (accessed December 17, 2012).
16. Yoko Ono, as printed as an epigraph in *YES Yoŕo Ono/YES Ono Yoŕo-ten*, exhibition catalog [(Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art et al., 2003), 5]. I first heard this aphorism from the artist at the press conference for *YES Yoŕo Ono* at Japan Society, New York, in 2000. It first appeared in John Lennon and Yoko Ono, “Imagine,” *Sundance* (August–September 1972), 68; despite the joint authorship, the large part of it is attributed to “Y.O.,” as opposed to “J.L.” (information provided by Kevin Concannon).
17. Ōkuma Toshiyuki offers a historically grounded critique of *dantai* using the concept of *dantai* as “academies” in his “Kōbo bijutsu dantai to akademizumu no keisei” (“Open-Call Art Associations and the Formation of Academies”), in *Bijutsu no yukue, bijutsushi no genzai: Nihon, kindai, bijutsu (The Future of Art, the Present of Art History: Japan, Modern, Art)*, ed. Kitazawa Noriaki et al. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999), 210–24. While learning from Ōkuma’s

- castigating argument, my observations attempt to seek a historically positive aspect of *dantai* to understand today's art world. I thank Maki Kaneko for directing my attention to this text. A more moderately critical view can be found in Mamuro Yoshitake, "Kizamareta kōbo-ten no rekishi: Tokyo-to Bijutsukan to dantai kōbo-ten" ("A History of Open-Call Exhibitions Inscribed into Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum"), in special feature, "Za bijutsu dantai" ("The *bijutsu dantai*"), *Gekkan bijutsu (Monthly Art)*, no. 255 (December 1996): 51–53.
18. "Kokuritsu Shin Bijutsukan no jigyo naiyo" ("NACT's Operations"), National Art Center, Tokyo, www.nact.jp/concept/index.html (accessed December 5, 2012); and "About the Center: Functions," National Art Center, Tokyo, www.nact.jp/english/outline.html (accessed December 5, 2012). 18 August 2008.
 19. Initially called a "National Gallery," the construction of the new facility for *dantai* was led by the late Hirayama Ikuo, an influential *Nihonga* painter, the chairman of Inten's board, and the president of Tokyo University of the Arts who was known for his international efforts for cultural preservation. From the beginning, its construction was criticized by the more progressive part of the art world, becoming another flashpoint of the controversy over the *gadan* and *dantai*.
 20. *Nitten 100-nen/The One Hundredth Anniversary of Nitten*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: National Art Center, 2007).
 21. The recent *Nihon kōgendai bijutsu jiten* made a departure from this convention with its chronological diagram, "Bijutsu undō no nagare" ("Currents of Art Movements") (598–603), perhaps in an effort to combine all the movements and *dantai* as well as *shūdan* in one continuing narrative diagram from 1860 through 2000. Its desire to codify an overarching narrative, however, contradicts the operational characteristics of *dantai*, while masking the longevity of many *dantai* still active today.
 22. Kojima Kaoru, "Jobun"/"Introduction," in *Bunten no meisaku/Masterpieces from the Bunten Exhibition 1907–1918*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: The National Museum of Modern Art, 1990), 1–10/11–16. A massive forty-one-volume series of *Nitten-shi (Nitten's History)*, from 1980 to 2002, plus a two-volume set, *Nitten-shi shiryō (Nitten's Historical Documents)* (consisting of a catalogue volume of all the works shown at this salon since the beginning and an index volume to them), from 1990, all published by the Nitten, themselves bespeak the size of the salon's cultural and financial capital.
 23. Data given in *Bunten no meisaku*, 34, 61, 78.
 24. Ōkuma, "Open-Call," 211–13.
 25. *Ibid.*, 213.
 26. *Ibid.*, 221.
 27. *Ibid.*, 222.
 28. Taki Teizō, "Nika 70-nenshi: Monogatari-hen" ("Seventy Years of Nika: A Narrative"), in *Nika 70-nenshi (Seventy Years of Nika)* (Tokyo: Nika-kai, 1985).

29. An aspect of Nika's postwar populism is demonstrated by a number of actors and singers who have achieved *nyūsen* at its salon. The list includes Asahina Maria, Ishizaka Kōji, Kishi Yuki, Satsuki Midori, Yashiro Aki, and Yukimura Izumi. By far the most famous is the young Kudō Shizuka (b. 1970), whose work has been accepted for the seventeenth time in 2012. See a report in *Suponichi*, www.sponichi.co.jp/entertainment/news/2012/09/06/kiji/K20120906004052600.html (accessed December 19, 2012). Postwar Nika consciously cultivated populism through its salon-related Nika Festival and other publicity programs. See Tomii, "After the 'Descent.'"
30. Descriptions of *chūkan dantai* in this paragraph extrapolated from Inoki Takenori, ed., *Senkan-ki Nihon no shakai shūdan to nettowāku: Demokurashī to chūkan dantai (Social Organizations and Networks in Interwar Japan: Democracy and Intermediate Organizations)* (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2008), ii–iii.
31. Kitazawa Noriaki, "Kindai Nihon bijutsu no seiritsu: Bunten no sōsetsu" ("The Formation of Modern Japanese Art: The Beginning of the Bunten"), in *Nihon Yōgashō Kyōdō Kumiai (JADA), Nihon yōgashō-shi (Oil Painting Dealers in Japan)*, 1st ed. (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1985), 222.
32. Inoki, *Senkan-ki Nihon no shakai shūdan to nettowāku*, iv.
33. Omuka Toshiharu, *Kanshū no seiritsu: Bijutsu-ten, bijutsu zasshi, bijutsushi (The Formation of Audiences: Art Exhibitions, Art Magazines, Art History)* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2008).
34. Ishii Hakutei, response to questionnaire, "Kanten wa ikani arubekika?" ("What Should the Government Salon Be Like?"), *Zauhō (Treasure on One's Side)*, no. 19 (August 1, 1948): 49, 64.
35. Additionally, the Nitten is prominently featured in Ozu's 1961 film, *The End of Summer (Kohayakawa-ke no aki)*. In it, Akiko (played by Hara Setsuko), a widow of Kohayakawa's eldest son, works at an art gallery, which sells *dantai*-style oil paintings. When Kohayakawa's relative visited her at the gallery, a red Nitten poster was prominently visible on the entrance or corridor wall.
36. See *Kotohajime-ten: Shōwa shōki no bunkashi-teki jiken — Fukuoka kenten/The Beginning: A Cultural Event in the Early Shōwa — Retrospective of Art Exhibition of Fukuoka*, exh. cat. (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, 1999).
37. Reiko Tomii, "Kyōdō kenkyū 'Kenten shiten no kenshō' ni tsuite" ("On Our Collaborative Research, 'The Study of Prefectural and Municipal Salons'"), *Jaic kaihō (Jaic Newsletter)*, no. 8 (December 8, 2006), 1; Iwase Yukio, "Kyōdō kenkyū 'Kenten shiten no kenshō': Hokkaidō-hen" (Collaborative Research "The Study of Prefectural and Municipal Salons: Hokkaido") *Jaic kaihō*, nos. 9–12 (April 7, July 12, October 26, 2007; February 8, 2008). The collaborative research began upon my query to fellow members of Japan Art Information Center (Jaic) about how to research regional salons.

38. The annual survey exhibition was later transferred to the Agency for Cultural Affairs in 1969 for its eighth exhibition, and it continued through 1980 with the nineteenth exhibition.
39. According to a list compiled in the 1963 catalogue, among the total of forty-seven prefectures (including Okinawa), only six did not participate in the Selection Exhibitions (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Aichi, Kyoto, Osaka, and Tottori), of which Tokyo, Aichi, and Osaka did not have *kenten* or equivalents. Okinawa, Kanagawa, and Tottori have *kenten*, and participated in the later exhibitions. Aggregated data provided by Iwase Yukio of Jaic.
40. Article 2 of “Shuppin kitei” (“Submission Guidelines”), flier for *Dai 1-kai kōbo Ashiya-shi bijutsu tenrankai* (*First Open-Call Ashiya City Art Exhibition*) (1948), reproduced in *Ashiya shiten/Ashiya City Exhibition 1948–1997* (Kyoto: Kōrinsha et al., 1997), 53.
41. Yoshihara was intimately involved with *dantai* collectivism as a Nika affiliate and member (since 1941). His shrewd sense of art-world politics was demonstrated when he founded Kyūshitsu-kai (Ninth Room Society) as a subgroup of Nika in 1939 with his fellow young Nika affiliates, whose vanguard works were routinely gathered together in the ninth room of Nika’s salon. He asked two prominent Nika members Tōgō Seiji and Fujita Tsuguharu to be its advisor to avoid the appearance of “splintering away,” as he simply wanted to have more exhibition opportunities. See Yoshihara Jirō, “Waga kokoro no jijoden” (“An Autobiography of My Soul”), six weekly installments, in *Kōbe shinbun* (*Kobe Newspaper*), June 4–July 9, 1967; reprinted in *Botsugo 20-nen Yoshihara Jirō ten/Jirō Yoshihara* (*In the Twentieth Anniversary of His Death*), exh. cat. (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art and History, 1992). He revealed his political savvy in his Gutai management: although Gutai was not a *dantai*, devoid of its own salon, one may argue that he appropriated the Ashiya *shiten* as a Gutai salon, where he could train its members and recruit potential talent without having to shoulder the physical and financial burdens of mounting a juried salon.
42. “12-sai no shōjo mo nyūsen: Ashiya shiten no shinsa owaru” (“Even a Twelve-Year-Old Girl’s Work Is Accepted: Ashiya City Exhibition’s Judging Concluded”), in *Yomiuri shinbun* (*Yomiuri Newspaper*), Hanshin edition, June 9, 1954; reproduced in *Ashiya shiten* (*Ashiya City Exhibition 1948–1997*) (Kyoto: Kōrinsha, 1997), 86.
43. Yoshihara Jirō, quoted in *ibid.*
44. “Kurōzuappu bijutsu gyōsei: Tokushū 1, Dai 1-kai kenten senbatsu-ten no hamon” (“A Close-Up View of Local Art Administration: Special Feature 1—First Selections from Kenten Exhibition and Its Repercussions”), *Bijutsu jōnaru* (*Art Journal*), no. 28 (April 1962): 7. This and other *kenten* articles provided by Kikkawa Hideki of Jaic.
45. *Ibid.*, 5–6.
46. Although juried salons are *kōbo-ten*, with anybody allowed to submit under “open calls” for works, not all *kōbo-ten* are “salon-style exhibitions.” This is true both before the *Bunten*, as observed by Ōkuma (“Open-Call,” 211–12), and especially after 1945, as will be mentioned later in text.

47. They were first identified in “Nippon rettō: Zen’ei gurūpu gaido mappu.” For local independent exhibitions, see Masaki Motoi, in *Yasei no kindai: Saijō, sengo Nihon bijutsushi, kirokushū/The Savage Mind in the Modern Age: Reconsidering Postwar Japanese Art History, Report*, ed. Shima Atsuhiko et al. (Osaka: The National Museum of Art, 2006), 155–57; *Hokkaidō andepandan to sono go no tenkai (Hokkaidō Independent Exhibition and Its Aftermaths)*, exh. cat. (Asahikawa: Asahikawa Museum of Art, 1996).
48. A further diversification, which resulted in the emergence of such independent specialists as art consultants and independent curators, is seen in the period of *kontenporarī āto*, in and after the 1980s.
49. See for example, Mikiko Hirayama, “The Restoration of Realism: Kojima Kikuo (1885–1950) and the Growth of Art Criticism in Modern Japan” (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2001); Nihon Yōgashō Kyōdō Kumiai (JADA), *Nihon yōgashō-shi (Oil Painting Dealers in Japan)*, 1st and 2nd editions (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1985 and 1994). The second edition includes “Kantō no yōgashō” (“Oil Painting Dealer in Tokyo and the Environs”) by Nakajima Masatoshi, in “Yōgashō no seiritsu” (“The Formation of Oil Painting Dealers”), chap. 5, replacing the segment of the same topic by Hikosaka Naoyoshi.
50. Notably, dealers frequently shouldered the administrative duties of *dantai* exhibitions. I owe this observation to Nakajima Masatoshi.
51. See *Tokyo-fu Bijutsukan no jidai 1926–1970/Age of “Tokyo Metropolitan Art Gallery” 1926–1970*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005).
52. *Bijutsukan*’s sister term, *hakubutsukan*, predated it but also originated in the exposition: The first *hakubutsukan* was part of the Yushima Seidō Exposition in 1872 at Ueno in Tokyo organized by the Ministry of Exhibition, displaying a wide range of objects from antique art works to natural-history specimens; this was considered the beginning of the Imperial Museum (Teishitsu Hakubutukan), which was subsequently reorganized as Tokyo National Museum (Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutukan).
53. For the circumstances of the first *dantai* use of the Takenodai Display Hall, see Furuta Ryō, “Nihon no bijutsu tenrankai: Sono kigen to hattatsu” (“Art Exhibitions in Japan: The Origins and Development”), *Museum*, no. 545 (December 1996): 45–46.
54. See *Tokyo-fu Bijutsukan no jidai*.
55. Its Japanese name was changed to Tokyo-to Bijutsukan in 1943 owing to the change of Tokyo’s legal administrative status.
56. See Seki Naoko, “Gaka/hihyōka/kyōikusha ni yoru tenran kaijō no kanōsei” (“The Possibility of Exhibition Halls Theorized by a Painter/Critic/Educator”), in *Tokyo-fu Bijutsukan no jidai*, 129. At the time of the third Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, in 1951, the special catalogue, *Kaigai no sakuhin (Works from Abroad): Dai 3-kai Nihon andepandan-ten/Third Tokyo Independent Art Exhibition/Troisième exposition des artistes indépendants de Tokyo*, lists its translated name as Ueno Art Gallery and Musée Municipal d’Ueno in the English and

- French prefaces (p. 1); the English name used for the 1970 Tokyo Biennale was “Tokyo Metropolitan Art Gallery.”
57. Nakajima Masatoshi, e-mail to author, June 5, 2009.
 58. “Kurōzuappu chihō bijutsu no mondaiten: Tokyo no eisei toshi, Kangawa -ken no baai” (“A Close-Up View of Issues in Local Art: The Case of Kanagawa Prefecture, a Satellite Region of Tokyo”), *Bijutsu jōnanu* (*Art Journal*), no. 34 (October 1962): 51. Kanagawa’s *kenten* was held at the newly built museum in 1952, but due to the dismal quality of *kōbo* works, it was terminated after the first salon.
 59. For example, in Wakayama’s annual schedule, the museum offers a space over two weeks in November 2009 to the Wakayama *kenten*. See www.bijyutu.wakayama-c.ed.jp/exhibition/schedule2009.htm (accessed December 5, 2012).
 60. For example, see Masaaki Morishita, “*The Iemoto System and the Avant-Gardes in the Japanese Artistic Field*,” *Sociological Review* 54, no. 2 (2006). However, it is dangerous to make an absolute equation of *dantai* with the *iemoto* system, as, unlike in the *iemoto* system whose ultimate goal is preservation of tradition, prewar *dantai*, even the most established *dantai*, achieved varying degrees of artistic evolution. Nika’s embrace of the new notably made this *dantai* a backbone of Japanese modernism.
 61. Ukita Katsumi (a member of Nitten and Issui-kai), quoted in “Kurōzuappu bijutsu gyōsei,” 9.
 62. “Gendai bijutsu no paionia-ten” (“The Exhibition, *Pioneers of Contemporary Art*”) is a major undertaking to survey “young artists” of prewar Shōwa. Its catalogue, published as a special issue, *Furusawa Iwami Bijutsukan geppō* (*Furusawa Iwami Museum Monthly Newsletter*), no. 25 (1977), lists the data of thirty-six collectives (including the salon-based and long-lived Bijutsu Bunka and Jiyū Bijutsu). The adjective *young* (*wakai*) appears both as the title for the data section, “Shōwa no wakai bijutsuka gurūpu no kiroku” (“Records of Young Artists’ Groups in Shōwa”) (p. 31) and in the postscript by editor Kitagawa Fram (p. 113). The exhibition of the same title, for which the special issue served as a catalogue, was held at Central Art Museum in Tokyo in the same year in 1977.
 63. A few additional groups, such as SPA Shūdan, from the same period can be found in *Nihon no shūreuarisumu: 1925–1945/Surrealism in Japan, 1925–1945*, exh. cat. (Nagoya: Nagoya City Art Museum, 1990).
 64. See “Za bijutsu dantai” (“The *bijutsu dantai*”), *Gekkan bijutsu* (*Monthly Art*), no. 255 (December 1996).
 65. “Kanten wa ikani arubekika?,” 46–49, 64. Kojima’s response appears on page 64.
 66. “Nihon Bijutsu-kai wa naze andepandan-ten o kaisai suruka” (“Why Japan Art Society Organizes an Independent Exhibition”), quoted in Bitō Yutaka, “1 Gensō no naka no gensō (1945–1949): ‘Bunka kakumei’ to ‘minshu-shugi bijutsu’” (“Part 1: Illusion in Illusion [1945–1949]: ‘Culture Revolution’ and ‘Democratic Art’”), special feature of “Teikō to

- zasetu no kiroku” (“Records of Resistance and Failure”), *Keishō (Form)*, no. 4 (June 1960): 7. I thank Justin Jesty for bringing this document to my attention.
67. I thank Justin Jesty for helping me clarify this point through our exchange.
68. Ibid.
69. See Segi Shin’ichi, ed., *Nihon andependan-ten zen kiroku 1949–1963 (Complete Records of the Japan (Yomiuri) Independent Exhibition 1949–1963)* (Tokyo: Sōbisha, 1993).
70. “Nihon Bijutsu-kai wa naze andependan-ten o kaisai suruka,” 7.
71. Organizer statement, in the first Yomiuri Independent Exhibition catalogue, quoted in Akasegawa, *Han-geijutsu anpan*, 51.
72. For reportage painting, see Justin Jesty, “Arts of Engagement: Art and Social Movements in Japan’s Early Postwar” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2010). This dissertation also examines two other collectives, Biiku and Kyūshū-ha.
73. It is almost symbolic that Akasegawa Genpei, who had first exhibited at the leftist independent exhibition in 1957, switched to the newspaper’s independent exhibition in 1958 in favor of the “directness” of painting that would not become a pattern (*ruikēi*)—a danger he saw in Social Realism—and the attraction of publicity (Akasegawa, *Han-geijutsu anpan*, 73–75).
74. One of the main brains behind Yomiuri’s program, Kaidō Hideo, later in the 1980s expressed to Akasegawa his vexation that his independent exhibition had failed to dismantle *dantai* (Akasegawa, *Han-geijutsu anpan*, 114).
75. See *Venechia biennāle: Nihon sanjū no 40–nen/The Venice Biennale: Forty Years of Japanese Participation* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation and Mainichi Newspapers, 1995).
76. Quoted in Mitsuda Yuri, “*Bijutsu hihyō* (1952–1957) shi to sono jidai: ‘Gendai bijutsu’ to ‘gendai bijutsu hihyō’ no seiritsu” (“The *Bijutsu hihyō* [Art Criticism] Magazine and Its Era: The Formation of ‘Contemporary Art’ and ‘Contemporary Art Criticism’”), *Fuji Xerox Art Bulletin* 2 (2006).
77. See “Gadan no hōkai” (“The Collapse of the Art Establishment”), special feature, *Bijutsu techō*, no. 304 (November 1968): 69–95.
78. Hamamura Jun, “Mittsu no shinjinshō: Gadan-gai no gaka-tachi no shinshutsu” (“Three New-Talent Awards: Advance of Painters from Outside the *gadan*”), *Bijutsu techō*, no. 202 (April 1962): 84–85.
79. More specifically, the institution in this sense signifies a system that “governs not only the behavioral modes but also the cognitive and emotional patterns of members of a given society,” as stated by Miyakawa Atsushi—an art critic who looms over the discourse of the institution and *geijutsu* (Art with a capital “A”) in 1960s Japan—in his “Kaiga to sono kage” (“Painting and Its Shadow”), *Me (Eye* [Ogikubo Gallery’s newsletter]), no. 6 (November 1965), reprinted in *Miyakawa Atsushi chosakushū (Writings by Miyakawa Atsushi)*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1980), 138. For more on the discourse on the institution of art, see Tomii, “Concerning the Institution of Art: Conceptualism in Japan,” in *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s*, exh. cat. (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999).

80. In his voluminous study, *1968*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 2009), Oguma Eiji expressly differentiates *kindai* and *gendai* in relation to the Zenkyōtō generation. However, his distinction seems to be based on a retrospective observation (*kindai* mired by the larger-than-individuals curses of life, such as poverty and war, vs. *gendai* troubled by the more individually anxious “identity search”).
81. See Tomii, “Historicizing ‘Contemporary Art’: Some Discursive Practices in *Gendai Bijutsu* in Japan,” *positions* 12, no. 3 (2004): 611–41.
82. Sakaki Kazuomi (Hikosaka Naoyoshi’s nom de plume), “70–nendai fuyu ni mukatte: Nissenbi, Nitten tōsō sōkatsu” (“Toward the Winter of the 1970s: A Critical Summation of Our Struggle with Nissenbi [JAAC] and Nitten Salon”), *Home: Uzujo seiun (Spiral Nebula)*, no. 2 (n.d., possibly November 1969): n.p.; quoted in Hikosaka, *Hanpuku: Shinjō geijutsu no isō (Reversal/Repetition: Phases of New Art)* (Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1974), 15.
83. Reiko Tomii, “How *Gendai Bijutsu* Stole the ‘Museum’: An Institutional Observation of the Vanguard 1960s,” in *Since Meiji: Perspectives on the Japanese Visual Arts, 1868–2000*, ed. J. Thomas Rimer (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2012), 144–67.
84. *Ibid.*