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Archiving the Intermedia:
Art Flowing between Media in the 1960s and 70s Japan

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Japanese art of the 1960s and 70s is characterised by the development of what became known as Intermedia. This movement was already apparent in the works of Jikken Kobo (active from 1951 to 1957), but reached its peak in the late 60s to early 70s.

This paper introduces Japanese intermedia art from the 50s through to the 70s, with a particular focus on the activities of the Video Information Center. Establishing a clearer picture of the intermedia art of this period, it discusses how we can discover and re-experience Intermedia in archives, that is, as original works or as records of irretrievable events.

1. Intermedia Art in Japan: 1950–1970s

When considering the history of Intermedia art in Japan, most scholars pick up Jikken Kobo as the earliest and most prominent artist collective.

Jikken Kobo (Experimental Workshop) named by art critic Shuzo Takiguchi, was started in 1951. Though the group was only active for 6 years, and did not form a coherent organisation, the activity of the group had a strong influence on subsequent artists and movements. The 14 members were very young — most of them were in their early twenties – and included artists, a photographer, music composers, a pianist, a poet and music critic, a lighting designer and a mechanical engineer. They collaborated closely on performances, exhibitions, and music concerts, as well as on, what they called, ʻshowsʼ, which were

[fig. 1] Stage of The Fifth Experimental Workshop Presentation (Photographs are cited from the exhibition catalogue of ˝Jikken Kobo – Experimental workshop˝, The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2013)

intermedia works that often made significant use of new technology.

For example, for the fifth Jikken Kobo show of 1953 (Dai-ichi Seimei Hall), they introduced a totally new device, AUTO SLIDE, developed by Tokyo Tsushin Kougyou, which was able to synchronize the sound from a tape recorder with the picture from a slide projector. This was one of the earliest audio-visual performances that combined these two formats.

Another pioneer was the Gutai Art Association, based in Ashiya, Kansai district. Founded by Jiro Yoshihara in 1954, Gutai had a similar organizational structure to Jikken Kobo. They had a president, a secretariat, members, and a manifesto. Gutai pursued new art both aesthetically and practically, pioneering installation performance, light and sound art. As the manifesto puts it: "Gutai art places the greatest importance on all bold steps that lead to an undiscovered world." [1] Jikken Kobo and Gutai's innovations led to the diverse and influential activities of several artists and groups in the 1960s.

One good example is Sogetsu Art Center (1958-1971), and another is, the work of Tatsumi Hijikata.

Sogetsu Art Center was founded in 1958 by Hiroshi Tesigawara, as a part of Sogetsu Group, a Japanese flower-arranging school. Sogetsu Art Center not only hosted several experimental events, but also published its bulletin "SAC", which was, as Kobo Abe wrote in the first issue of SAC,[2] committed to 'work[ing] out the problem of synthesis which is common to all genres in contemporary art", Sogetsu Art Center worked on breaking down the existing media categories and encouraging an intermedia synthesis. In their event series' Sogetsu Music Inn' and 'Sogetsu Contemporary Series', for example, they tried to consider contemporary music, thorough its connection to other genres such as dance, film and animation.

[fig. 2] Stage of Rose-coloured dance, 1965

Tatsumi Hijikata who established Butoh in 1959, with his performance Kinjiki (forbidden colour) was fully engaged in collaborations with artists from various genres. In his work Barairo Dance (Rose Coloured Dance) Hijikata worked closely with visual artists such as Natsuyuki Nakanishi and Gempei Akasegawa, and in his work Anma (Masseur), he not only created a performance, but invited poets, artists and graphic designers to contribute to an accompanying publication.

EXPO '70 in Osaka marked the culmination of the Intermedia art of the 50s and 60s. Many artists and groups who contributed to the Intermedia movement were involved. For example, Hiroshi Teshigawara from Sogetsu Art Center in the Automobile Pavilion, Katsuhiro Yamaguchi from Jikken Kobo in Mitsui Pavilion, Tatsumi Hijikata and Gutai group in Midori Pavilion, and Fujiko Nakaya (and E.A.T) in PEPSI Pavilion.


[fig. 3] Left: Hijikata Tatsumi appearing in the film 'Birth'
Right: Midori Pavillion, EXPO '70

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*1   Shoichi Hirai, "Gutai — Toward a Reconsideration", *What's GUTAI?*, 2004, Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha, p. 169.
*2   Kobo Abe, "Expectation to the New Synthesised Art", *SAC/NO.1*, March 1960, p2.（安部公房「新しい総合芸術への期待」、『SAC/NO.1』1960 年 3 月 20 日発行、p. 2。）

From this point on, it is fair to say, Intermedia activities became more wide-spread and common. Intermedia was no longer exclusive to artists and critics. It could be accessed and even used by anyone interested in contemporary art. The activities of the Video Information Center clearly illustrate this shift.

2. Video Information Center

Video Information Center（hereafter VIC）started as a university club at the International Christian University（ICU）in 1972. [*3]

A statement made by Ichiro Tezuka, the leader of VIC, outlines the motives and purpose for founding VIC. At the time, VIC primarily aimed to produce videos to improve exchanges between ICU students, to "realise accurate, prompt, and comprehensive information exchange, that is, ultimately, communication." [*4]
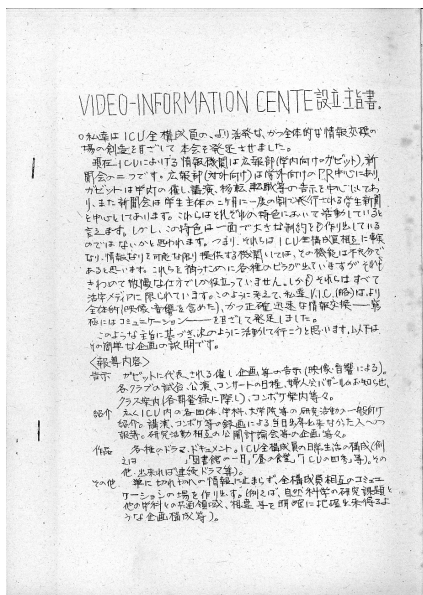
［fig. 4］VIC Statement, 1972

＊3　The Founding Members were: Yusuke Ito, Yasuhiko Suga, Takashi Noyama, Makoto Naiki, Soichi Ishii / Representative: Ichiro Tezuka.

＊4　VIC Statement, 1972, held by Keio University Art Center

From the beginning, VIC was, as Tezuka put it, committed to making "software" with video. The club began by taking video of lectures, student sports games, and other on-campus events and showing the videos in student lounges. Tezuka explains the reason for this video activity: "It is hard to communicate how amazing an event was to those absent. A video of the event can do that."

VIC subsequently embarked on recording a variety of contemporary artistic practices taking place outside the campus.

The Documentation of Events/The Organisation of Video-related event

VIC's video library consists of approximately 1,200 videotapes, mostly made during the 1970s and 1980s, documenting Intermedia art practices such as theatre, dance, and live music, exhibitions, and artists working on their art. All the films and tapes in the VIC library are shot by the VIC itself. As you can see from the length of the list, they were extremely active during this time. In addition to the VIC video library, there are a number of related documents held in the archive. The library catalogue can be accessed via Keio University Art Center's website（hereafter KUAC）.
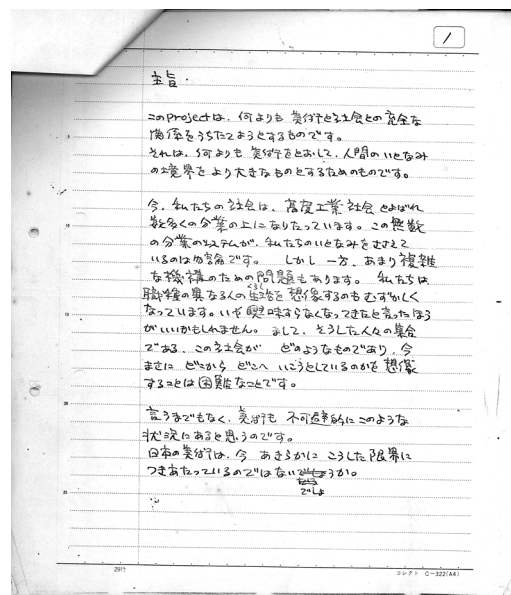
［fig. 5］Statement of Soft Museum project

In 1974, they conceived of the project Soft Museum, which has still been realized. According to its proposal, the project sought to set up VTRs and cameras in museums and elsewhere across a city to, as they put it, "convert the entire current situation of art into information and disseminate it to society." [5]

In 1979 VIC participated in the exhibition "Video from Tokyo to Fukui and Kyoto" held at MoMA, New York（19 April – 10 July, 1979）, at which they screened video recordings of Butai 7（Dance No.7）by Min Tanaka and Hitogata by Tatsumi Hijikata and Yoko Ashikawa.

Interestingly, this MoMA exhibition made a connection between VIC and an archive:

> The Video Information Center, founded in 1972, is engaged in the recording of today's events and performances using the medium of video. Its object is to maintain an archive and collection and to distribute and show tapes. The videotapes cover various areas of performance, theater, and dance and total over 400 hours. [6]

VIC takes on a function as an archive – or used to be seen as a movement incorporating that function – and is thus an important subject that should be examined when discussing the relationship between Intermedia art and archives.

The Promotion of Video Technology

VIC promoted video by selling and renting video equipment at venues such as SEIBU Sports in Kichijoji, sometimes in close collaboration with video equipment manufacturers, and through holding workshops, such as experimental "Video Juku"（Video School）, to teach techniques for shooting and editing video.

The tape library of VIC is extremely important as a primary resource which records the various Intermedia activities of the 1970s. The activity of VIC itself is also significant. As I briefly outlined, VIC invited people to use video cameras in their events and workshops. In other words, what they intended was, to involve non-artistic, non-professional people in Intermedia art practices through the use of video techniques.

3. The Location of Intermedia

The artworks of Intermedia resemble the works of performing arts several ways. They often have no strong materiality. Some works, like the Soft Museum project previously mentioned, exist only in project proposals or speculations, others only exist for the brief life of exhibitions, and these often never get presented again. In a similar way to performance, sometimes we only know the works through what is left, such as photographs, movies, posters and brochures.

Considering this aspect of Intermedia art, the importance of archival preservation can't be over emphasized. But art-related archives are still lacking in Japan. For example, the situation of resources relating to the artist collectives and movements I introduced in the previous section is as follows:

· Jikken Kobo: Not collected, but scattered through museums, galleries, and private collections
· The Gutai Art Association: housed at Osaka City Museum Of Modern Art
· Sogetsu Art Center: housed at Keio University Art Center（2013-）
· Tatsumi Hijikata and Asbestos-studio：housed at Keio University Art Center（1998-）
· EXPO'70: Held by Osaka city, but not compiled.

Though these documents relate to internationally recognized artists, Jikken Kobo and EXPO'70 are yet to be compiled. If we look at the resources of individual artists, the situation is more difficult. Still, some scholars, curators and gallerists are working hard to investigate and preserve the works of important artists, such as Yutaka Matsuzawa and Natsuyuki Nakanishi.

KUAC is involved in what it calls 'Temporal Archiving' of important resources. It is impossible to archive all the resources, but some resources need immediate care to avoid loss or outflow. In these cases, KUAC conducts basic research and arrangement, and looks for a 'foster' organisation that can manage the archive more permanently.

＊5　Project Comittiee: Yutaka Matsuzawa, Yusuke Nakahara, Ichiro Hariu, Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, and Yoshiaki Tono Co-organiser:Fujiko Nakaya
＊6　The Museum of Modern Art, *Video from Tokyo to Fukui and Kyoto*, 1979, p. 24

4. Intermedia art in Archive: Records and Documents of Event

As already mentioned, intermedia artworks are often recorded through primary resources, such as drawings, plans, notes, photographs, and movies. To understand and if possible, to re-experience intermedia artworks in archives, the records of events themselves is important. That is, the record of the events in which intermedia artworks were originally presented, or the context within which they were first experienced. Archival documents relating to events might include the following:

· Pre-Event（Advertisements and their drafts）
    Posters, flyers, Press releases, Invitations
· During-the-Event（Structural elements and their drafts）
    Programs, Brochures
· Post-Event（Records and their drafts）
    Photographs, Movies, Reviews

Cross-referencing the records of artworks and the events surrounding them, archives could show the contexts in which artworks were originally generated.

With this as a goal, KUAC has started editing and accumulating event records relating to Intermedia. Though collecting and arranging documents relating to Events is not yet fully underway, we are investigating and creating event records based on documents like posters, flyers and brochures stored at KUAC.

In the course of this work, however, we have arrived at the question of whether there are not already institutions engaged in archiving similar collections.

Through conversations with curators and scholars at museums, galleries, theatres and academic institutions, it is clear that they compile lists of events. Some institutions such as Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties [7] and National Art Center, Tokyo [8] share their lists online. Tokyo National Research Center covers exhibitions by museums and commercial galleries in a more comprehensive way, and the National Art Center covers important exhibitions organised by museums. But these cases are exceptions and sharing event records in artistic fields is not common in Japan at present.

A single event record could point in a number of directions at once. For example, an exhibition record could connect activities such as the documentation of artworks, editing the biographies of artists, compiling the history of museums and producing the tourist information.

Event records work as a way to connect and open artistic and cultural activities to broader social contexts.

5. Sharing Event Records

In Europe and the U.S, event records have started to be shared through the OpenData framework. By searching on Open Data Portals such as European Data Portal or Open Data Network, we can find a certain numbers of event records, compiled by cultural institutions and local governments [9]. New York MoMA also shares their exhibition records on GitHub [10].

In Japan, as I mentioned, few cultural and academic institutions make the event records available to the public, but we can find some interesting involvements by NPOs and local governments.

Tokyo Art Beat, which is the most popular and comprehensive online exhibition guide in Tokyo, offers ArtBeat API which

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＊7　Exhibition records on modern and contemporary Japan from 1935, which are collected by the end of August 2013.

＊8　Art Commons（1995-）http://ac.nact.jp/. "Records of Japanese Art Exhibition（日本の美術展覧会記録）1945-2005" was once online but currently closed. I have not conducted thorough investigation yet, but some museums and galleries list past exhibition records on their website, mostly in 'Past Exhibition' section. For example, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa tries to list up every activities in the museum, including non-exhibition events like educational programs and events hosted by general public: https://www.kanazawa21.jp/exhibition_event.php

provides event records listed on the Tokyo Art Beat website [11].

YOKOHAMA LOD is a project driven by Yokohama Arts Foundation, which combines records of events, artworks and information on artists provided by different organisations [12]. This project encourages the use of art-related data by third parties like business firms, and has led to the release of a new art guide app called Yokohama Art Map.

As Tokyo is preparing for the 2020 Olympics, there are also some innovations in the government's cultural sector. An institution called "VLED: Vitalizing Local Economy Organization by Open Data & Big Data", originally a cabinet-led project, is going to release a data model to share event records [13].

The Agency for Cultural Affairs recently launched the cultural information platform "Culture Nippon", to gather information on art events to form the cultural program for the Olympic Games [14].

Keeping these movements in mind, it is important to start

discussions among people working in academia, especially curators and scholars in University Museums and Theatres, on how the research-based records could be opened, which are currently hidden in the universities, and relate them to the wider cultural context.

【本論考について】
本論考は、2017 年 Performance Studies international 年次大会において発表した「Archiving the Intermedia: Art Flowing between Media in the 1960s and 70s Japan」の原稿を元に、論考「アート・イベントのドキュメンテーション：イベントレコードの共有化に向けて」（慶應義塾大学アート・センター 年報 24）[15] 執筆にあたって調査した内容を加筆、修正したものである。

＊9 European Data Portal: https://www.europeandataportal. eu/ Open Data Network: https://www.opendatanetwork. com/Examples of event-related open data:Museums and galleries events and exhibitions in Leeds https://www. europeandataportal.eu/data/en/dataset/museums-and-galleries-events-and-exhibitions City of West Hollywood Open Data Art Events https://data.weho.org/dataset/Art-Events/p6yp-4ai9

＊10 https://github.com/MuseumofModernArt/exhibitions

＊11 Tokyo Art Beat: http://www.tokyoartbeat.com/ API: http://www.tokyoartbeat.com/resources/doc/api/

＊12 YOKOHAMA LOD http://yan.yafjp.org/lod
Events: Yokohama Art Navi http://yan.yafjp.org/ by Yokohama Arts Foundation, Civic Art Gallery http://artazamino.jp
Artworks: Osaragi Jiro Memorial Museum http://osaragi. yafjp.org/, Yokohama Museum of Art http://www.yaf.or.jp/yma/

＊13 IMI: Infrastructure for Multilayer Interoperability https://imi.go.jp/

＊14 Culture Nippon: http://culture-nippon.go.jp

＊15 本間友「アート・イベントのドキュメンテーション：イベントレコードの共有化に向けて」、『慶應義塾大学アート・センター 年報 24』、慶應義塾大学アート・センター、2017 年 7 月、pp. 143-150。