

Melody of the Firmament Journal of Koji Kinutani Tenku Art Museum
Collaborative exhibition special issue

Collaborative exhibition : Koji Kinutani exhibition - Asuka no Hoki Uta (Anthem of Asuka)
Nara Prefecture Complex of Man'yo Culture

Anthem of Venice

Another archetypical landscape of Koji Kinutani



Venezia with the Rising Sun, Hope 2006 (Mixed media)

Description of Exhibited Works

Koji Kinutani's perspective on drawing techniques
- Thoughts on the Venetian School of Painting -

SEKISUI HOUSE Presents *Kinutani*

絹谷幸二 天空美術館
Koji Kinutani Tenku Art Museum

Purpose of the exhibition

This event is a collaboration with the "Koji Kinutani exhibition - Asuka no Hoki Uta (Anthem of Asuka)" to be held by the Nara Prefecture Man'yo Cultural Center. The exhibition traces the development of Kinutani's art from a specialized Nara perspective with life in ancient city Nara as the archetypal landscape.

However, Kinutani's experiences in Venice totally changed his set of values and aesthetics that had colored his life and work in Japan up to that point. The things you see for the first time, the people you meet, the atmosphere of the city, the Italian outlook on life that celebrates "mangiare (eating), cantare (singing), amore (love)." And, the masters of the Italian Renaissance whose works touched his deepest feelings. "My Japanese sensibilities, or Japaneseness, that had bound me until then were blown asunder, and I realized that I could accept any kind of Italian brilliance, be it red or blue." (Koji Kinutani Autobiography) As recalled by Kinutani, those memories of Venice could be regarded as another archetypal landscape for his art. That intersection of the eastern and western aesthetics of Nara and Venice gave birth to the rich art of Kinutani we see today. It could be said that those two archetypal landscapes taught him the importance of viewing things with both eyes and, as a result, became his emotional mainstay, demonstrating wisdom for living.

Description of Exhibited Works

<cover> **Venezia with the Rising Sun, Hope** 2006 1818 × 2273 Mixed media

Venice, the floating city, which flourished in the Italian Renaissance period of the 15th through 16th centuries, is known for having produced many outstanding painters, and its artistic culture, characterized by splendid colors, continues to fascinate people around the world.

In 1971, Koji Kinutani, imbued with the longing and hope of youth, embarked on a study-abroad program in Venice, Italy. The moment he left the train at Santa Lucia Station, "all of my Japanese sense of values was blown away in an instant," he recalls. New encounters, the atmosphere of the city, and the rich history, everything he saw and heard was burned into his memory, and became his archetypal landscape in Italy.

This work depicts a bird's-eye view of the cityscape of Venice, which emerges vividly in the morning sun against the backdrop of the Adriatic Sea. The cityscape, built alongside the Grand Canal and the beautiful churches and bell towers reminiscent of ancient Roman architecture rising high on isolated islands are enveloped in the sunlight reflected on the surface of the water, creating a delicate and elegant lyricism. A homage to the Venetian painters called "colorists" is alive in scenery that changes through seven colors, while the notes and letters written lightly within the painting give us a sense of Kinutani's youthful exaltation. No doubt each brushstroke would have brought back happy memories.

A salute to the Italian outlook on life that celebrates "mangiare (eating), cantare (singing), amore (love)"



Venice - Apple above the Waves

1972 1075 × 787

Fresco (Strappo)

In the early 1970s, Koji Kinutani studied fresco techniques in earnest at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts and devoted himself to researching reproductions of works by Giotto and Piero de la Francesca. Among them, a series with an apple motif was created using free production (creation).

This work depicts a peeled apple floating above the waves, hinting at the passage of time as it loses its shape. A series of works, "Apples above the Waves" (also titled "Flight of the Apple") was shown in an exhibition held by the Bevilacqua La Martha Foundation in that year, and it received the "La Martha Award." The work was purchased by the Venice Municipal Museum of Art, earning Kinutani the right to mount a solo exhibition at the museum. The theme of that memorable work, his first to win an award in an overseas exhibition, was the apple.

In Western art, a bitten apple evokes an image of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Bible's Old Testament. However, Koji Kinutani projects the "Kuso-zu (the nine stages of a decaying corpse)" in Japanese medieval art onto it, giving it form. Inherent in this is the Buddhist philosophy "Mujokan," a sense of impermanence which implies that all tangible objects will eventually decay. Now in his second year of studying abroad, he offers a glimpse of his binocular perspective and way of thinking whereby spiritual climates and aesthetics of both East and West are merged. It could be said that Kinutani's new stage began with the intersection of the original landscapes nurtured in his hometown, the ancient city of Nara, and then in Venice, capital city of the Italian Renaissance.

Incidentally, it is said that the inspiration for the apple came from the fact that his mentor, Professor Bruno Saetti, who had invited him to study at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts, made it a rule to eat an apple after every meal. This would seem to be an unexpected source of creativity.

Spring - Christina Bringing Flowers

1972 380 × 455

Fresco (Strappo)

A Venice streetscape emerges in the enveloping light of a brilliant crimson sun. From the mouth of a girl with a beautiful profile lovely flowers flutter like spring fairies. It is a scene full of happiness, depicted in his second year of studying abroad. A snapshot of the young Koji Kinutani's time in Venice, immersing himself in the Italian outlook on life, "mangiare (eating), cantare (singing), amore (love)."

This is a small but symbolic work of the Anthem of Venice.





Redentore with the Moon

1972 909 × 1167
Fresco (Strappo)

Portrait of a Young Girl - Francoise

1976 1165 × 915
Screen printing

A screen printing featuring almost the same composition and motif as those of his masterpiece of the 1970s, "Angela and the Blue Sky II" (held at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo). At a glance, it can be seen that the tears shed by the girl symbolize deep sorrow and anger at the repeated ravages of war. The face, supported by the body of a collapsed wooden figure, is filled with tears depicted with contour lines that run like lightning, and it exudes the fragile danger of existence while shouting "Viva Italy!" ("Long Live Italy!"). Here, one can catch a glimpse of "Mujokan," the Buddhist view of impermanence which preaches that all tangible objects will eventually decay. A large rose flower is drawn just below the missile that pierces the girl's throat, symbolizing Kinutani's impassioned message that, in the wake of deep sorrow, dreams and hopes will surely be restored. A work embodying the prayer for world peace offered by Koji Kinutani, who constantly asserts that "art is mightier than any weapon."

The Church of Redentore, displays its majestic presence on the island of Giudecca, located on the opposite shore to Piazza San Marco. Built in gratitude for the end of the plague that raged in the middle of the 15th century, the church's interior is decorated with many masterpieces by artists of the Venetian School.

Koji Kinutani began his Venice sojourn on this remote island, often searching for fragments of Venice Sancai (tri-colored) Ceramiche (ceramics) on the tidal flat near the church, as if, he recalls, dreaming of Marco Polo's encounter with the Tang Sancai during his far eastern expedition.

This work, painted in Kinutani's second year of studying abroad, depicts the Redentore Church which stands in a place of important treasure-hunting, quietly emerging in the moonlight. The silhouette of this church might have appeared in his mind as a graceful figure, as if it were gently enveloping the youngster from the East.

Although Koji Kinutani was awakened to freewheeling color expression during this period, this work is painted in a restrained color tone that is almost monochrome. The massive moonlight realizes coexistence of silence and eloquence, as if Koji Kinutani's nostalgia and dreams for the future were intersecting, and trembling, delicate borderlines fill the scene with poetic sentiment.



Sound of the Tide - Sunrise in Venice

2006 910 × 1167
Mixed media

The light of the rising sun shining down on the streets of Venice, which has been called the "Queen of the Adriatic Sea" and takes pride in its glorious history. The splendid city of water is wrapped in the breath of the morning, and the hopes and dreams of a new day overflow into everyday life. This is an energetic scene, replete with happiness, as if Kinutani's memories of studying abroad in his youth have been vividly revived. Gold and silver paints are used for the sunlight and the sea of clouds floating in the sky, creating a magnificent symphony of colors, where heaven and earth resonate with the rhythmically arranged buildings.

Koji Kinutani's perspective on drawing techniques

- Thoughts on the Venetian School of Painting -

Mamoru Nanjo, Advisor/Curator, Koji Kinutani Tenku Art Museum

City of Colors School

Venice, where Koji Kinutani studied art in his early years, ranks alongside Florence and Rome as one of the notable art cities of the Italian Renaissance era. It became a hub for East-West exchange, established a solid position through its lucrative shipping industry, and is also renowned for having produced a number of great masters in the arts. The characteristic of the painters, who were called the Venetian School, was their rich sense of color.

As is well known, Venice, the city of water, is a place where the ever-changing sunlight reflects off the surface of the water, and the entire city emerges in a fantastic display of elegant colors. Since the Middle Ages, arts and crafts such as decorative mosaics in churches and Venetian glass have mirrored the sensuous and sensual aesthetics cultivated by the environment. The technique is called the "color" of the Venetian School in contrast to the "drawing" of the Florentine School, and it greatly influenced the development of Western art since the Renaissance, bringing about an opposing composition in form. Here is the origin of "drawing vs. painting."

For Koji Kinutani, seeking to master fresco painting at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts in the early 1970s, this was one of the most important themes in understanding art history, and the search for "what is drawing" was the backbone of Western art and became the starting point for realizing its essence.

Florentine School vs. Venetian School

There is an interesting anecdote in the chapter on the great master Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) in "Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects," a series of artist biographies that formed the basis for modern art history written by Giorgio Vasari (1511-74), which introduces a wide range of Renaissance artists and touches on their individual artistic theories. Vasari noted that Michelangelo criticized Tiziano Vecelli, better known as "Titian" (c. 1487-1576), the greatest master of the Venetian School, while acknowledging his talent, as having no choice but to conceal with vague colors his incapability due to his ignorance (lack of training in) of drawing.

Michelangelo, whom Koji Kinutani admires and respects, was an all-round genius who mastered the tradition of Florentine drawing and fully demonstrated his talents in sculpture, painting, and architecture. In Michelangelo's time, contemporaneously with the rise to prominence of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the "paragone" - comparing the respective superiority and inferiority, not only of sculpture and painting, but also of literature and music - was taking place. Vasari recorded it vividly. Particularly notable as a dispute paragone between painting and sculpture was the conflict between Leonardo and Michelangelo. They repeatedly exchanged harsh criticisms of each other's work, producing numerous anecdotes.

However, it was none other than Michelangelo's perspective on the drawing that put an end to that feud. His aphorism, "Painting and sculpture are mental activities consisting of the acts of addition and deletion, and it is futile to debate over which is superior; painting, sculpture, and architecture are brothers and sisters born of the same father, which is drawing," is famous for encapsulating the essence of drawing. In the first place, the importance of drawing, which the Florentine School advocated, began with the imitation of nature and developed into an intellectual field that extends to the realm of scholarship that seeks to elucidate the providence of nature using a single line. In light of the characteristics of painting materials, such as quick-drying fresco and tempera, it was believed that a carefully thought-out sketch was essential. In other words, it is a drawing method that emphasizes borderlines to enable the object to be drawn clearly. It also encouraged the development of linear perspective, which was the prototype for today's perspective drawing, and became a clue that invited us into the entrance to natural science.

In that era, however, there occurred a major reform that overturned the values and aesthetics of the time. That was the discovery and evolution of oil painting techniques. The painters of the Venetian School recognized that oil painting, the latest method, was the ideal medium for painting.

In Venice, a city on water, frescoes could easily be damaged by humidity, and there was high demand for moisture-resistant painting materials. So, at that time, it made sense that oil painting techniques established in the north should be promptly introduced. In his chapter on the Italian painter Antonello da Messina (circa 1430-1479), Vasari describes that Messina learned the improved oil painting technique of Jan Van Eyck (1390-1441), the early 15th century Flemish painter and first introduced the oil painting technique to Italy, promoting the development of the Venetian School.



Photo taken by the author
Venice in the 1970s



Giorgione
La Tempesta (detail)



Tiziano Vecellio
The assumption



Michelangelo Buonarroti
Dessin (detail)

The Venetian School's high awareness of color is noteworthy. Its members were devoted to the "sfumato" technique (shading off colors to produce a hazy, smoke-like effect) developed by the master Leonardo da Vinci, who is said to have visited Venice in around 1500, and they strived to improve their techniques in order to master the characteristics of oil painting, which has excellent transparency, gloss and covering power, and dries slowly, and the delicate and elegant effects of color through layered application.

Their way of depicting female figures, which was later compared to the roots of Western European beauty-painting style, was a highlight of their art, and their sensual, gentle facial expressions, filled with the brilliant oil colors fascinated royalty and titled nobility of the time. Canvas, an important foundation material for oil painting, was also abundantly available in Venice. The hemp cloth used to make sails for Venetian ships, was one example. Oil paintings on canvas were lightweight and portable, and innovative enough to replace the conventional mural techniques as the mainstream. The Venetian School was a step ahead of the rest of Italy in both the use of canvas and the introduction of oil painting. It could be said that the birth of the color school was inevitable.

However, this approach was regarded as the opposite of the Florentine School's theory of figuration. In contrast to the "intellectual" expression of the Florentine School, which emphasized linear and ideal forms, the color expression of the Venetian School was largely perceived as "sensory" Compared to the Florentine theory, which preached the significance of first contemplating, then drawing on paper, and finally deepening the conception, the Venetian method seemed totally haphazard. Michelangelo's words mentioned above regarding Titian were born out of that contrast in values.

What is drawing (dessin)?

In fact, it was Koji Kinutani who recognized the differences in the opposing schools' views on formative art and who pursued the universal aesthetics of 500 years of Western art. Koji Kinutani considered drawing, which is the backbone and essence of Italian Renaissance art and reflected it in his own creative activities. Through reproduction of works by the great past masters, he explored what Michelangelo, whom he admires, was trying to say about drawing, and he studied the nature of the Venetian School's color expression. This ultimately led him to "color drawing," which also became the starting point of his art in the true sense.

As is well known, the germination of the theory of drawing can be seen in the 'Geijutsu-ron' (Theory of Art), which emerged from the end of the 14th century into the 15th century and explains how important drawing is for art and artistic activities.

For example, the treatises on drawing written by Cennino d'Andrea Cennini (c.1360-1440) and L. B. Alberti (Leon Battista Alberti, 1404-72) transcended the mere transmission of craftsmanship and the birth of linear perspective, and served as "handbooks" for artists. Later, they became the basis for the art theories of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Vasari.

In other words, drawing, as the primary source of creativity for all creative activities, came to be seen as the most important intellectual work for clarifying and crystallizing the image in the artist's mind and refining it to a level as if it were verbalizable, making it a technical exercise as well as the spiritual pillar of the artist.

Drawing, as the driving force of the great Italian Renaissance movement, was the backbone and essence of creative activity, changing its form with the times. This is symbolized by the words of Leonardo da Vinci, who called drawing - the father of the three major arts, painting, sculpture and architecture - "human beings' most noble spiritual activity."

Unique characteristic of the Venetian School

Incidentally, the most important question to ask in this essay is whether or not Titian, master of the Venetian School, was really making light of drawing, as Michelangelo pointed out. Also, what does it mean to not be aware of drawing?

A little before Titian's time, there was a master, Giorgione (c. 1476-1510), who is credited with establishing the style of the Venetian School. Vasari wrote that "Giorgione did not make drawings and was convinced that painting with color was solely the best method, and that this was the essence."

It should be noted that the factors which led Vasari to believe Giorgione's method to be heterogeneous included the Venetian School's unique 'painterliness' in contrast to the "line" drawings of the Florentine School. Vasari also introduced Titian's peculiar production procedure in the chapter on the painter.

That was: "It's drawn roughly, in one fell swoop with speckles, so when viewing it up close, we can't discern what it represents. However, when seen from a distance, a perfect figure emerges."

Here, there were none of the contour lines which the Florentine School considered to be most important. Also noteworthy are the words left by the painter, Palma Giovane (1544-1628), who witnessed Titian's later production activities.

"First, he would paint a mass of color as the foundation for what he wanted to depict, I saw with my own eyes that, instead of a neutral color



Leonardo da Vinci
Dessin (detail)



Koji Kinutani Dessin



Koji Kinutani Dessin • Collage

or lead white, he applied a very strong undercoat of pure red clay (terra rossa, or Venetian Red). Then, he dipped the same brush into red, black, and yellow to paint the bright areas and, with four strokes, he made a stunningly masterful figure appear; sometimes he painted with his fingers."

Interestingly, Vasari called this technique the "spot-drawing method (macchia), a simplified, energy-saving production method unique to the Venetian School whereby the artist roughly applies masses of color and directly draws using the variations in hue.

When colors intersect and complex tones are developed, there naturally occur visual changes due to differences in brightness, saturation, and hue. Form, depth, and three-dimensionality are born out of the relationships among colors.

In modern painting, the color tone of the entire painting space, such as color schemes and gradation, is referred to as "valeur" (value) and is recognized as an essential theme in constructing the pictorial space. In other words, it is "color drawing." It should be noted that Giorgione and Titian incorporated Leonardo's sfumato into this technique, establishing the concept of rich color expression without contour lines.

"In figures and objects that are far from the eye, the painter should paint exclusively speckles, with indistinct outlines and without sharp." Leonardo's famous words that reject the contour lines come to mind: "Painter, you must not enclose the body with lines... It is not the shape that is most worthy of study and contemplation, but the shadow...". In fact, it was Leonardo da Vinci himself who developed from "line drawing" to "color drawing (shading)" and awakened to a scientific perspective of making full use of chiaroscuro to create aerial perspective. Considering this, we could say that the discovery of "line vs. color" was truly epoch-making, completely changing the values and aesthetics of the time, born out of the binocular perspective of Leonardo da Vinci's scientific point of view and his: emotion as an artist.

Listed as representative painters of the Venetian School are Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430-1516), Giorgione (1477-1510), Tiziana Vecellio (c. 1490-1576), Tintoretto (1518-1594), Paolo Veronese (1528-1588), Tiepolo (1696-1770), etc.

Line vs. Color

Eventually, this confrontation between "drawing (lines)" of the Florentine School and "painting (colors)" of the Venetian School developed in the 17th century into the Poussin School (Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665, French painter): line, form, static, objective, intellectual, flat) versus the Rubens School (Peter Paul Rubens 1577-1640, Flemish painter: color, expression of inner images, dynamic, subjective, sensory, three-dimensional). It was rekindled in French academies in the 18th century and carried over to Neoclassicism vs. Romanticism in the 19th century. Following the birth of Impressionism, "color" led to Fauvism, which appeared in the early 20th century, while "line and form" developed from late Impressionism to Cubism. This confrontation between line and color gave birth to a magnificent variety of artistic expression.

In other words, the trends that emerged from the exploration of drawing in the Italian Renaissance spread throughout Western art and, while influencing each other in various ways, left a rich footprint over the next 500 years.

Formation of Koji Kinutani's Style

Koji Kinutani understood the differences between these opposing compositional approaches. The reason for this was that the fresco technique had a feature that makes one aware of the relationship between lines and colors. It could also be called a technical restriction. Because the paint application had to be carried out on the planned area (giomata) within a day (24 hours being the time it takes for the half-dried plaster to set hard), preparation of a cartoon was essential and clear borderlines of what was to be painted were the lifeblood of fresco painting. Hesitation and correction during the production process were prohibited. Before the appearance of cartoons of the same size as the final painting, a sinopia (reddish-brown line drawing) drawn on the intermediate coat of the fresco conveyed the importance of lines. Metaphorically speaking, the production style was to color within borderlines; in other words, to first determine the shape using lines and then apply colors inside those borders, which could be said to resemble, in a sense, painting in a coloring-in book.

As a result of studying this post-fresco replication, Koji Kinutani began to emphasize borderlines, reviewed his previous production procedures, and achieved significant progress from the chaotic monochrome style of his days at the Tokyo University of the Arts. The colors applied within the clear borderlines become much brighter, the image of the painting became clearer, and the clarity of the space became even more conspicuous. It could be said that he reached into a new stage that had never previously existed.

Koji Kinutani's real breakthrough, however, started here. He found a certain inspiration in being able to engage in free production drawn in parallel with what he had learned through studying fresco, which was based on rigorous and strict copying. Thus, he adopted the Venetian School's approach to color expression, the spot-drawing method (macchia).

This is a drawing method where, initially, the painting space is roughly established using color planes. For the color scheme, he painted in a freewheeling manner, unconstrained by the subject matter and rather seeking a combination that evokes unexpectedness. When the planes of color intersect, some kind of image emerges. He pursued the illusion of fluctuation, and then he used contour lines to clearly define the images



Giotto, copy
Koji Kinutani 1972



Melodic Trick
Koji Kinutani 1966



Linda with Two Pyramids
Koji Kinutani 1972

that could be seen there. Many colors surrounded by black contour lines, not only brushstrokes but also paint drips and accidental splashes, evoked various scenes, and ran across the painting space lightly and rhythmically as a fountain of overflowing dreams. The dynamism of a band of seven colors was full of strong formativeness that also encompassed the cubist perspective; that is, deformation and reconstruction of the form. That was the genesis of Kinutani's style in both name and actuality.

In other words, he expanded the procedure of "line to color" into "color to line" and sublimated it into a novel style. It could be said that this change in thinking was the greatest achievement to come out of Koji Kinutani's period of study at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts.

Fortunately, the Venice Academy of Fine Arts incorporated the Academia Gallery containing masterpieces by Titian and other members of the Venetian School, including Giorgione's "La Tempesta." In addition, the guidance of Professor Bruno Saetti, who advised Kinutani to come to Venice, suggested a novel contemporary expression that was not bound by classical fresco style.

Reverse Thinking

Excellent examples during that period were "The Window (La Finestra)" 1971 and "Woman in the Room" 1972. Both works have the same motif and composition, presenting a deformed figure of a human body sitting in an indoor space. However, there is a marked difference in impact between the two works. The former has a chaotic aspect in which the planes of colors intersect in a complex manner, while the latter introduces contour lines surrounding the colors, with the effect of allowing the clear form to run rhythmically through the painting space.

The former is an original work created by Kinutani while he was devoted to the study of replicating fresco paintings, giving us a glimpse of his counteraction to repeated strict line-drawn representation. It could be said that he was trying to balance the spirit of his youth by intentionally painting in opposing styles. In the latter, the contour lines that were once discarded during his free production activity are reborn from a new perspective and sublimated into a novel style. It can be seen that Kinutani consciously repeated the opposite procedures of "line to color" and "color to line" to confirm the change of form.

Those truly give us a glimpse of "reverse thinking," which incorporates the formative views of the Florentine School and those of the Venetian school. Both works could be regarded as touchstones for sublimating the opposing compositional aspects of "line" and "color" into a new form. Furthermore, Koji Kinutani projected this inspiration into the style of Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978), the master of metaphysical painting in Italian art, and intensified it, exploring an imaginary landscape in which various unrelated motifs coexist on the painting space. It was the embodiment of "the combination of contemporary fresco and a new Italian flair" which Kinutani was seeking.

Koji Kinutani evolved painting procedure with color drawing, beginning with a comparative verification of the respective drawing standpoints of the Florentine and Venetian Schools. For him, the fresco technique was the one and only approach, which, differently from that of oil painting, can express the states of lines and colors more clearly due to the quick-drying process. Here, we see the power of "reverse thinking," taking advantage of the limitations and inconvenience of art materials.

Following Kinutani's return from Venice, he took the world by storm with the charm of the dynamic lines and vivid colors created using the fresco technique when he exhibited his latest works in Japan. Eventually, fresco became synonymous with Koji Kinutani and he rose to become a "darling of the era."

Incorporation of Color Drawing

Koji Kinutani, who was already well versed in the line style of the Florentine School through his study of fresco paintings, learned about the color approach of the Venetian School and established his unique painting style through reverse thinking. Currently, he incorporates "color drawing" in teaching painting to children as his "lifework."

Generally, the initial step in painting would be line drawing. The shape of the object to be pictured is first modeled with lines and coloring follows. This procedure may be the style of "painting a picture" that everyone is familiar with. Kinutani starts by defying conventional wisdom. Surprising the young students is his starting point for teaching painting.

The first step is to freely color the whole painting space using a thick brush. The colors on the palette can be applied as primary colors or mixtures of two or more colors. The brush is not washed after every stroke, which creates areas of dull color or parts biased toward warm or cool shades. Some children divide the space finely and color it, while others paint roughly across the spaces. An infinite variety of personalities can already be seen at this stage. Children themselves see the unexpected differences with their own eyes, arousing their interest and curiosity. Then, an instruction that they probably have not experienced before is given to them.

"Take a close look at the whole colored space. And then, draw up with contour lines the shapes that appear and the images that emerge."

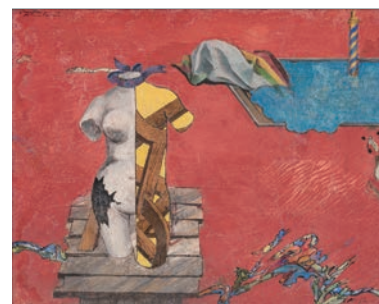
Many children, puzzled, draw the faces of their parents, siblings or friends, familiar landscapes, and scenes from everyday life, but the pre-applied



The Window (La Finestra)
Koji Kinutani 1971



A Woman in the Room
Koji Kinutani 1972



Torso's Tears II
Koji Kinutani 1972

colors are intricately interlaced, creating unpredictable results. The outcome is an “interesting” picture. The children themselves are excited by the unexpectedness of the result. This reverse-thinking instruction approach, which takes advantage of the general drawing method, brings about the joy of drawing freely and the brilliance of individuality, and could be said to be a painting production technique that condenses expectations, surprises, and responses.

This “reverse thinking and approach to training “imagination” is the true value of Koji Kinutani, who seeks to convey the joy of art, traveling around Japan to deliver a series of lectures “Kodomo, Yume, Art, Academy” (“Children’s Dream, Art, Academy”), sponsored by the Japan Art Academy and the Agency for Cultural Affairs.



Melody of the Firmament in Italy
Koji Kinutani 2006



Jewel in the Adriatic / Distant View of San Marco
Koji Kinutani 2006



Scenery of the workshop

Koji Kinutani's Ideals

Drawing is not just sketching or studying to paint. And, of course, the term does not refer to monochromatic figures made only with pen, pencil, or charcoal. There is "line drawing" and there is also "color drawing." A work without drawing does not exist. There are ways of seeing and thinking about things that support creativity. The more artists themselves confirm and refine their values and aesthetics, nurtured by their own thoughts and philosophies, and the more they explore drawing, the better they can see the light of continuous newness. Here lies the brilliance of a deep spirituality that transcends time and space, learned through repeated drawing, which is the essence of art. The importance of the study of drawing that gave birth to the great art of the Renaissance was evidenced by the fact it became the basis of later Western art as Vasari's “theory of disegno”

While studying in Venice, Koji Kinutani was confronted every day with the works of the old masters. Combining the perspective of drawing thus gained with the ideals of his youth, he established a rich imaginary world.

Koji Kinutani moved to Venice in the 1970s, when American contemporary art was the mainstream and, as if going backward in time, confronted the classics of Western art and explored the source of his creativity. Venice is, of course, home to the Venice Biennale, a global festival of contemporary art with a history of 120 years, and it is renowned not only for the old but also for the new. Kinutani stressed the importance of learning the classics. With that as a first principle, he sought to approach the essence of art from the perspective of learning from the past.

Therefore, through drawing, he became convinced that there is an eternal newness which transcends the changing and shifting values of beauty over time and is passed down from generation to generation, fostering universal aesthetics that never go out of fashion. It was also the secret of creation, replete with infinite possibilities for the future.

It is his current dream and hope to convey to as many children as possible the importance of drawing, the most sublime creative act that brings out the brilliance of each person's individuality, and thereby to celebrate the infinite potential of human beings and their excellence, going beyond the dimension of simply being good or bad.

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