

# Tiger Tateishi: Biography and Curriculum Vitae

## Biography

Tiger Tateishi, born Kōichi Tateishi (立石 紘一) on December 20, 1941, in Ida, Chikuho (now Tagawa City, Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan), was a multifaceted Japanese artist renowned for his contributions to painting, manga, illustration, picture books, and ceramics. Growing up during Japan's postwar reconstruction and rapid economic growth, Tateishi was immersed in the vibrant cultural landscape of Showa-era songs, American movies, Disney cartoons, and science fiction, which profoundly influenced his eclectic and imaginative oeuvre. His pen name "Tiger," adopted in 1968 and written in katakana (タイガー立石) to evoke a Western flair, reflected his birth in the Year of the Tiger and became a recurring motif in his work, symbolizing both personal identity and cultural commentary.

Tateishi graduated from Musashino Art University's Junior College of Art and Design in 1963, marking the start of his artistic career. That same year, he debuted at the 15th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition with a large-scale collage relief titled *Community*, which garnered critical acclaim for its innovative use of tin toys and driftwood. Embracing the avant-garde, he co-founded the Sightseeing Art Research Institute (1964–1966) with painter Hiroshi Nakamura, producing works that parodied Japan's tourism boom during the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. His early paintings, often categorized as Japanese Pop Art, collided national symbols like Mt. Fuji, Godzilla, and samurai with global icons such as Mao Zedong, Coca-Cola, and the Ku Klux Klan, offering a satirical lens on Japan's modernization and global influence.

In 1965, Tateishi began creating nonsense manga under his pen name, influenced by his friend and collaborator Fujio Akatsuka. His manga, characterized by whimsical humor and surreal narratives, introduced the popular catchphrase "nyarome." In 1969, seeking creative stimulation, Tateishi relocated to Milan, Italy, where he lived for 13 years. There, he worked in the studio of designer Ettore Sottsass, contributing fantastical and erotic architectural drawings for Olivetti's industrial design research center. During this period, Tateishi developed his signature "panel-split" paintings, which adapted manga's storyboard format into large-scale oil works infused with science-fiction themes inspired by authors like Ray Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke. His encounters with Giorgio de Chirico in Italy further shaped his use of surreal perspectives and dreamlike compositions.

Returning to Japan in 1982, Tateishi settled in Ichihara, Chiba Prefecture, and resumed producing manga, illustrations, and paintings under the name Tateishi Taigaa (立石大河亞) for fine art and "Tiger Tateishi" for commercial works. From the late 1980s, his art increasingly incorporated traditional Japanese motifs, such as Mt. Fuji and Shinto gods, blending them with

futuristic and surreal elements. In the 1990s, he expanded into ceramic sculpture, establishing workshops and moving his studio to Yoro Gorge in 1995. Tateishi's work, rooted in Japan's Edo-period "floating world" (ukiyo-e) aesthetics and contemporary Pop Art, explored the tension between tradition and modernity, often reflecting on Japan's cultural evolution and his own existential musings.

Tiger Tateishi passed away on April 17, 1998, at the age of 56 in Chiba Prefecture. His legacy endures through retrospectives, such as *The Endless Tiger* (Tagawa City Art Museum, 1999), *Metamorphose Tiger* (O Museum, 1999), and *TIGER Tateishi: The Retrospective* (Chiba City Museum of Art, 2021), which celebrate his dynamic contributions to Japanese contemporary art. His works, ranging from vibrant oil paintings to whimsical ceramics, continue to captivate audiences with their colorful, fantastical, and thought-provoking narratives.

## Curriculum Vitae

### Personal Information

- **Name:** Kōichi Tateishi (立石 紘一), known as Tiger Tateishi (タイガー立石) and Tateishi Taigaa (立石大河亞)
- **Born:** December 20, 1941, Ida, Chikuho (Tagawa City), Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan
- **Died:** April 17, 1998, Chiba Prefecture, Japan
- **Nationality:** Japanese

### Education

- **1963:** Graduated from Musashino Art University, Junior College of Art and Design, Tokyo, Japan

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- **1964:** *Integrated Civilization Exhibition*, Sato Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- **1969:** Alexander Iolas Gallery, Milan, Italy
- **1994:** *Tiger Tateishi's 1963-1969 Exhibitions in Chikuho, Milan, Tokyo, and !K*, Tagawa Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan
- **1999:** *The Endless Tiger*, Tagawa City Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan (posthumous retrospective)
- **1999:** *Metamorphose Tiger: Walking through the Labyrinth with Tiger Tateishi*, O Museum, Tokyo, Japan (posthumous retrospective)
- **2021:** *TIGER Tateishi: The Retrospective*, Chiba City Museum of Art, Chiba, Japan (posthumous retrospective)

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- **1963:** 15th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, Tokyo, Japan

- **1964:** *Young Seven*, Minami Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (curated by Yoshiaki Tono)
- **1966:** 15th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, Tokyo, Japan
- **2012:** *Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA
- **2017:** *The World is Strange! The Manga and Paintings of Tiger Tateishi and Yuichi Yokoyama*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, Japan
- **2018:** *Japanorama: A New Vision on Art Since 1970*, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, France
- **2019:** *Takuro Tamayama & Tiger Tateishi*, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles, USA

## Selected Works

- **1963:** *Community*, large-scale collage relief, tin toys and driftwood
- **1969:** *You Get Many Many Yourselfs*, oil on canvas, 119.7 x 162 cm
- **1973:** *Cubic Worlds*, oil on canvas
- **1975:** *Consciousness about Humanbody*, oil on canvas, 166 x 120 cm
- **1979:** *Time Elevator*, oil on canvas
- **1987:** *Spiral Moon; Rainbow Moon; & Necklace Moon*, pencil, color pencil, and gold leaf on paper, mounted as hanging scrolls
- **1991:** *Wind God, Thunder God and the Shadow Fuji*, oil on canvas, triptych, 145 x 268.5 cm
- **1992:** *Fuji and Wars*, oil on canvas, triptych, 145.8 x 268.2 cm
- **1992:** *Fuji and Matsu-Tree Like a Tiger*, oil on canvas
- **1992:** *A House of Scenic Beauty*, oil on canvas, panel-split format
- **1997:** *Ôh-Edo Complexity*, oil on canvas, pentatych, 194 x 485 cm

## Selected Publications

- Manga series in various Japanese magazines and newspapers (1965–1998)
- Illustrated children's books (dates vary)
- Exhibition catalogs:
  - *Tiger Tateishi's 1963-1969 Exhibitions in Chikuhô, Milan, Tokyo, and !K* (1994)
  - *The Endless Tiger* (1999)
  - *Tiger in Transformation: Tiger Takeishi in the Maze* (1999)

## Selected Collaborations

- **1969–1982:** Worked with Ettore Sottsass in Milan, producing architectural and design drawings for Olivetti
- **1965–1969:** Collaborated with Fujio Akatsuka on nonsense manga projects

## Selected Auction Highlights

- **2007:** *Moon-Sea-Brain - Sea of Seven Happiness* (3 works), sold for USD 247,902 at Christie's Hong Kong
- **2020:** *You Get Many Many Yourselfes* (1969), sold for GBP 29,000 at Bonhams, London
- **2022:** *Tiger Tiger Exploding Bright*, sold for EUR 27,720 at Sotheby's, Paris

## Awards and Recognition

- **1963:** Critical acclaim for *Community* at the 15th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, praised by critic Ichiro Hariu
- Posthumous retrospectives at major institutions, cementing his influence on Japanese Pop Art and contemporary art

## Professional Experience

- **1964–1966:** Co-founder, Sightseeing Art Research Institute, Tokyo, Japan
- **1969–1982:** Designer and illustrator, Olivetti Industrial Design Research Center, Milan, Italy
- **1990s:** Established ceramics workshops, Japan

## Collections

- Chiba City Museum of Art, Chiba, Japan
- Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, Japan
- National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan
- Tagawa City Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan
- Private collections worldwide

## Additional Notes

- Tateishi's work is characterized by its surrealist and Pop Art influences, blending traditional Japanese iconography with modern and futuristic themes.
- His "panel-split" paintings, inspired by manga layouts, are a hallmark of his innovative approach to narrative in fine art.
- Tateishi's ceramics and picture books reflect his commitment to accessibility and engagement with diverse audiences.