

Tatsuo Ikeda (Japanese, 1928–2020)

Biography

Born in Saga Prefecture, Japan, in 1928, the course of Ikeda's early life was dramatically altered by the ongoing intensity of World War II, culminating in his service as a kamikaze pilot at the age of fifteen. Spared by the ending of the war, in 1948, Ikeda made the decision to live a more free and anti-authoritarian life, moving to Tokyo to attend Tama Art University where he became engaged in Tara Okamoto and Kiyoteru Hanada's Avant-garde Art Study Group.

After the Korean War broke out in 1950, the artist pursued a strong anti-war position, Ikeda created expressive realist drawings that fused reportage and satire. His early work depicted the heartlessness of society in the age of automation and questioned the role of individual responsibility and free will after feeling betrayed by his government, and the political and cultural machinery of interpersonal and international conflict. Ikeda organized the artists and writers group, NON, and his drawings from this period exposed domestic and international political corruption, eventually developing into monstrous portraits and grotesque creatures that reveal the dark side of human nature.

In the 1960s, the artist produced several series of works inspired by a wide range of motifs, such as masks (*Hundred Masks*), toys (*Toy World*), and anatomical images (*Dissection Archaeology*). In the following decade, harboring a profound fascination with space and time, he carried out conceptual long-term performances, *Asama – Ararat Olive's Ring Plan and Brahma Tower*, in which he tried to experience an unimaginable perpetual time. In his series, *Brahman*, which he began in 1973, the artist found release from social causes to embrace a state of eternal truth and bliss occupied by genderless embryonic forms in infinite space. Narrating his own story of genesis, the artist turned his attention inward, exploring the metaphysical bonds that underlie and unify the universe—defining his paintings as a “wormhole connecting the inner and outer worlds.”

Ikeda continued exploring further artistic possibilities, creating assemblage and relief works made with found objects, and handscrolls depicting the flow of time, as well as a series of paintings, *Phases of Fields*, about universal gravitation. In addition to visual art, Ikeda was a critically celebrated writer; and his work has been exhibited extensively in Japan and abroad. The artist was also featured in the 2010 documentary film, *ANPO: Art X War*, directed by Linda Hoaglund.

Ikeda died in November, 2020, in Tokyo.

- Selected Solo Exhibitions
- 2022 *Tatsuo Ikeda: BRAHMAN*, Fergus McCaffrey, Tokyo, Japan
 - 2018 *Tatsuo Ikeda: An Elliptical Visionary*, Nerima Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
 - 2017 *Tatsuo Ikeda*, Fergus McCaffrey, New York
Tatsuo Ikeda – The Universe of Boxes, Galerie Tokyo Humanité, Tokyo, Japan
 - 2015 *Tatsuo Ikeda*, Fergus McCaffrey, St Barth
 - 2014 *Art That Indicts 1: Ikeda Tatsuo*, Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan
Tatsuo Ikeda: Known and Unknown, Tokyo Art Museum, Japan
 - 2013 *Tatsuo Ikeda – Field Phase V, Drawings*, Galerie Tokyo Humanité, Tokyo, Japan
 - 2012 *Tatsuo Ikeda: Requiem Deicated to Friends and Hope for Peace*, Mutsu Memorial Museum, Yamaguchi, Japan
 - 2011 *Tatsuo Ikeda, The Trajectory of Postwar Avant-garde Art*, Yamanashi
 - 2010 Prefectural Museum of Art, Taro Okamoto Museum of Art (Kawasaki), Fukuoka Prefectural Museum of Art, Japan
 - 2009 *Tatsuo Ikeda – Field Phase III, Empty Time and Space Landscape*, Galerie Tokyo Humanité, Tokyo, Japan
 - 2006 *Tatsuo Ikeda – Field Phase, Wormhole / Line*, Galerie Tokyo Humanité, Tokyo, Japan
 - 2004 *Tatsuo Ikeda – Field Phase*, Galerie Tokyo Humanité, Tokyo, Japan
 - 2003 *“Flow and accumulation” Continuation / Universal Gravitation*, Galerie Tokyo Humanité, Tokyo, Japan
 - 2001 *Tatsuo Ikeda – 24 HEADS*, Galerie Tokyo Humanité, Tokyo, Japan
 - 1993 Galerie Tokyo Humanité, Tokyo, Japan
 - 1985 *The World of Tatsuo Ikeda*, Ikeda Museum of 20th Century Art, Ito, Japan
 - 1984 Yokohama Civic Art Gallery, Yokohama, Japan
 - 1974 Kinokuniya Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
 - 1965 Azuma Gallery, Kyoto, Japan
Morioka Gallery, Morioka, Japan
 - 1954 Yoseido Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- Selected Group Exhibition
- 2022 *Tatsuo Ikeda / Michael E. Smith*, Nonaka-Hill, Los Angeles, USA
The Milk of Dreams, La Biennale di Venezia, Italy
Surrealism Beyond, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
Reportage Painting, Tate Modern, London, the United Kingdom
 - 2021 *Tatsuo Ikeda & Philippe Parreno: Field Phase*, Fergus McCaffrey, New York
 - 2015 *Painters I loved and Hated: Hariyu Ichiro and Postwar Art*, The Miyagi Art Museum, Japan
 - 2013 *A Poet and Art: takiguchi Shuzo’s Surrealism*, Otaru City Museum (Hokkaido), Yoruzu Tetsugoro Museum (Iwate), Tendo City Museum of Art (Yamagata), Ashikaga Museum of Art (Tochigi), Japan

- Selected Group Exhibition
- 2012 *Fiftieth Anniversary of Fugen Mountain Village*, Saku Municipal Museum of Modern Art, Nagano, Japan
Art Will Thrill You! The Essence of Modern Japanese Art, National Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan
Genealogy of a Gallery: Asakawa Collections and Japanese Art in 1960-80, Ashikaga Museum of Art, Tochigi, Japan
Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde, The Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 2009 *The Coal Mine as Cultural Resource*, Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo, Japan
- 2007 *Taro Okamoto and His Contemporaries in the Post-War Era*, Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 2005 *Drifting Objects of Dreams: The Collection of Shuzo Takiguchi*, Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
Age of "Tokyo Metropolitan Art Gallery": 1926-1970, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
- 2004 *Remaking Modernism in Japan 1900-2000*, Sezon Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan
Portraying Human Beings: From the Museum Collections, Nerima Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- 2003 *Kyushu Power: Kyushu in World Art*, Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto, Japan
- 2000 *Visage: Painting and the Human Face in 20th Century Art*, The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, Japan
Homage to Taro Okamoto from Seven Artists, Taro Okamoto Museum of Art, Kawasaki, Japan
Japanese Art in the 20th Century, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo
- 1998 *Realism in Postwar Japan 1945-1960*, Nagoya City Art Museum, Aichi, Japan