ISHIDA

SELF-PORTRAIT OF OTHER

Using drawing and painting as his principal means of expression, the Japanese artist Tetsuya Ishida gave us a body of work that is a lucid, disturbing critique of our malaise as contemporary subjects trapped in a hyper-technicized world and unable to rebel against its objectification and depersonalization. His painstakingly detailed works are an outstanding testimony to the devastating effects on Japanese society of the 1990s financial recession in the country. The recession was detonated by the bursting of the real estate and financial bubble and is not dissimilar to the one the whole planet, but particularly the West, has been undergoing since 2008.

In a career barely longer than a decade, cut short by the artist's death in 2005 at the age of only thirty-two years, Ishida created a powerful, Kafkaesque imaginary that speaks of solitude, isolation, and a profound identity crisis created by a world that has made us into exchangeable pieces in a complex machinery driven by production and consumption.

Ishida's hybrid bodies—merged with technological devices, insects, and everyday objects or boxed into buildings, pavements, and claustrophobic interiors—act as incisive metaphors for this experience, which is also conveyed in the inscrutable, neutral expression and lost gaze on the face that appears in many of the works and is, according to the artist, a "self-portrait of other"—the disconcerting yet evocative expression that gives this exhibition at the Museo Reina Sofía its title.

In its sensitivity and unquestionable symbolic richness, the work of Ishida makes strong demands on the viewer. It causes unease but is also alluring, perhaps because of the way it reflects our own fears, the unnamable anxiety we feel on realizing we are not the owners of our decisions and that our acts are conditioned by external factors that mark our behavior. To a certain extent we might say his work manages to represent visually the French philosopher Michel Foucault's theory that, in contemporary society, power is no longer imposed by force but through our own internalization and naturalization of its workings, which are rendered invisible and thus automatically and unconsciously reproduced.

Self-Portrait of Other is a gateway into the enigmatic world of Tetsuya Ishida, a painter whose work is still little known outside his own country, although it has achieved a greater international presence in recent years. Through a broad, meticulous selection of his works, the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue analyze the recurring influences in his career and the derivations and connections we can establish to contemporary cultural forms such as manga, or to historical ones such as Realism.

The artist's family, particularly Michiaki Ishida, has been essential in our research and contextualization of a painter whose work has an exceptional ability to touch the fears and uncertainties of the present. I thank them for their assistance. I also extend my thanks to the Wrightwood 659 exhibition space in Chicago, where the exhibition will travel in autumn 2019.

José Guirao Cabrera
Minister of Culture and Sport

Advanced capitalist societies like to present the financial crisis as an anomaly, a passing recession from which, as long as we understand it as an opportunity to reinvent and grow, we will come out stronger. This idea, which is insistently promoted in media narratives, has colonized the collective imaginary, so that it is generally accepted today that each of us is individually responsible for our own fate and that it is always in our own hands to change or improve our situations.

The financial crisis, however, is not a simple low point in capitalism. It is not a circumstantial obstacle to be overcome with certain measures at a point in time. Crises, as Karl Marx warned, are consubstantial facts in a system that has learned to use them in an increasingly sophisticated manner as instruments of control and repression, as means by which to eliminate movements perceived as potential dangers. Neoliberalism, thanks to its hidden instrumentalization of the current financial crisis, is camouflaging and legitimizing its project to dismantle the welfare state as a sort of crusade for individual freedom, while its actual aim is not to put an end to an excess of institutionalism but to build a new institutional framework in which the state no longer retains the function, assigned to it after World War II, of regulating the flows of capital but instead only fulfills its functions of controlling and administering the tax and legal systems.

In precrisis years, the figure of the businessman played a central role as a model of social triumph that could be upheld for anyone to pursue. This figure has been gradually overtaken by another, quite different one: the subject sunk in debt, the paradigmatic example of a new form of slavery engendered by neoliberalism. In a society in which (almost) nothing escapes the logic of productivity and consumerism, citizens—especially those who have debts to pay off—are required to give their total availability, blurring the boundaries of work and leisure time, the personal and the social. When the space of the factory is totalized (yet simultaneously rendered invisible), when free time and business merge and become confused, then the possibility of building up communities and creating critical social relationships vanishes.

Japan has spearheaded this process in some ways. Nearly two decades before the rest of the world, the country suffered a devastating financial crisis following a speculative and real estate bubble. This gave rise to more recent phenomena such as *karoshi*—death from too much work—or the *hikikomori*, young people who opt to live in a state of near-total social isolation. These phenomena are deeply rooted in contemporary reality and are figures of a new form of comprehensive alienation that takes over our time, social relations, even our own bodies, and effectively prevents our emergence as political subjects. The arrival of this form of alienation could not have happened without the growth of automation in postindustrial societies, a process in which Japan has also played a leading role, and which, contrary to the utopian development that certain discourses proclaimed, has ended up favoring the evolution of new forms of servitude and inequality.

The work of the Japanese artist Tetsuya Ishida—which, owing to the artist's early death, spans little more than a decade—depicts this situation with disturbing, analytical, descriptive precision. Ishida's style was explicitly figurative at a moment when the hegemonic language in the art world was the installation—which, as Rosalind Krauss notes, often tends toward the spectacular and a fetishist fascination for gadgetry and technology. Although the artist's work also relates to other forms of expression of the same years (manga, certain types of television narrative), Ishida's figurative practice is markedly anachronistic in its deliberate coldness and meticulous descriptiveness and its noteworthy engagement of manual skill, which requires slow, painstaking execution.

Connections can also be found between aspects of Ishida's work and figurative work of the 1920s and 1930s—a period that, obvious differences aside, has much in common with the present. In those years there was also discussion around the limitations of revolutionary transformational action, and this has regained relevance in light of the regressive turn of neoliberalism after the fall of the Twin Towers and the financial crisis of 2008. Writers such as the British historian T.J. Clark and the Italian

intellectual Enzo Traverso have recuperated and reinterpreted Walter Benjamin's notion of "left-wing melancholia," which they see as a kind of "red thread" running through revolutionary culture in the last two centuries. They consider that, far from leading to a paralyzing resignation, as claimed by other writers such as the American political theorist Wendy Brown, melancholia has a strong potential for subversion and liberation, being, according to Traverso, "a way of accessing the memory of the vanquished, with the unfinished hopes of the past that are waiting to be reactivated."

Traverso considers art to be where this melancholy drive and its potential can best be embodied and expressed, and we can find it in Ishida's work. Benjamin described the new objectivity, which was at the forefront of the return to figurative painting in interwar Europe, and can be compared to Ishida's work, as a melancholy form of art that makes misery an object of pleasure and is soaked in "sadness"—or an "apathy of the heart" that overcomes the sufferer with a fatalistic, paralyzing nostalgia.

Unlike the artists of the new objectivity, Ishida refused to use the dominant languages of his time. His choice of the time-consuming media of painting and drawing to depict the malaise of the hypertechnicized contemporary world was a refusal of the temptation of sadness. Ishida's melancholia does not have the demotivating effect that Benjamin warned of. Automatism, isolation, violence, and new forms of slavery in late capitalist society are portrayed without self-complacency or contemplative self-absorption and with no spectacular recourse to pain. Ishida's paintings cause an effect of estrangement that directly addresses the viewer and holds a potential for emancipation.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari noted that any transformational project, including pure resistance, must necessarily be accompanied by critical reflection on the institutional apparatus it activates and deploys. In a sense this is what happens with Ishida's decision to use painting rather than installation or video to show the effects of automation and mechanization on the contemporary subject. From widely different parameters, we might see a similar preoccupation and interest in the work

of Rogelio López Cuenca, whose work will be exhibited at the Museo Reina Sofía at the same time as Ishida's as part of our effort to incorporate these reflections on our present into our exhibition program. Using different means and strategies—Ishida focuses on the body and the solitary experiences of isolation and noncommunication; López Cuenca takes a more expansive approach, sometimes similar to agitprop—the work of both artists contains the potential of melancholy that Traverso speaks of. Both oeuvres are lucid chronicles of the present, providing us with an account of how the discourses and logic of power are inscribed into the art system and condition our ways of seeing and relating to the world.

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Nineteenth-century Realism is where we see the first unstereotyped contemporary depiction of the laborer as subject. The image of the misfortunate, traditionally associated with original goodness and innocence, took a radical turn after the revolution of 1848, when realist painters confronted the issue of work with the dignity of the historical genre in painting.

Linda Nochlin, in her 1971 essay on Realism, asserts that fidelity to visual reality was just one aspect of a complex movement that manifested as a substantial change from the conception of time as a medium in whose course the experience and meaning of perception unfolded to a type of perception caught up in fragments of the present. Contemporaneity thus developed novel forms of interpellation that, according to Nochlin, expanded the notion of history, contributing to the growth of a new historiographical context for the social whole at a moment when everyday life was moving into the foreground.[1]

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Mimetic representation of reality was not, in fact, the key to Realism. Rather, after 1848, it was the coming into being of contemporaneity itself that achieved full validity as an irrefutable expression of fact. Artists had long aspired to belong to their times, but the demands of Realism confronted them with the challenge of particularizing the qualities of their age to an extent never previously attempted. In some ways, according to Nochlin, this led them to anticipate their own times. The idea of the forerunner in art has conditioned a hermetic conception of contemporaneity, which the avant-gardes were later to sustain.[2] For nineteenth-century realists, however, belonging to their own times meant analyzing the particular experiences, events, "customs, ideas and the appearance of the time," seriously and without idealization, as described by Gustave Courbet in his programmatic "Realist Manifesto" (1855),[3] several years after his paintings *Un enterrement à Ornans* (A Burial at Ornans, 1849) and *Les casseurs de pierres* (The Stonebreakers, 1849) were controversially exhibited at the Salón of 1850–1851.

1. Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (1971; London: Penguin Books, 1990), 103.

2. Ibid., 105–6.

3. Linda Nochlin, *Realism and Tradition in Art 1848–1900: Sources and Documents*, ed. H. W. Janson (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 33.

In meticulous detail, *The Stonebreakers* (fig. 1), with its absence of aerial perspective, its stonelike concretion, its lack of depth in the landscape, and the stern, noble appearance of the men it depicts, conveys the weight of a poverty-stricken reality. Placing this landmark of universal social history side by side with the implausible situation in Tetsuya Ishida's *Kōkyō-butsu* (*Public Property*, 1999), places the focus on work and pictorial realism, two of the keys to this artist's oeuvre. The painting is both devastating and penetrating; the scene, apparently,

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Fig. 1: Gustave Courbet, *Les casseurs de pierres* (The Stonebreakers), 1849

might just be real. A construction worker turns his back on the identical faces of three young men buried in a city pavement. The men embedded in concrete are a metaphor for the submerged economy, the matter that fills in the foundations of the social factory. Stones are scattered about the box-like prison that holds the men's bodies—another constant feature in Ishida's work.

In the twentieth century, photography and film, because of their initial efforts at objectivity and their nature as media for mass use, enabled a newer, more multifaceted approach to the world of labor than what painting had offered, turning the focus onto mundane matters that could offer a reflection of reality. Documentary photography's continuing interest in the working class is present in the intersection between politics and the avant-garde in art. Their convergence throws light on various aspects of the international workers' movement. From the first Lumière film to the recent *A fábrica de nada* (The Nothing Factory, 2017) by Pedro Pinho, a significant number of films have shown the daily lives of workers under industrial and financial capitalism and its assault on their most important conquests.

The proletariat entered painting in the twentieth century with Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo's *Il quarto stato* (The Fourth Estate, 1901), a large piece showing a march of workers at the beginning of Italy's industrialization. Between the world wars, a new horizon opened up for realism, with alignments and tendencies such as socialist realism, new objectivity, Novecento, and *Valori plastici* and the *Retour à l'ordre* (return to order), which defended "the truth of appearances" from various programmatic perspectives. The new objectivity, in order to communicate the ills of a sordid, ailing bourgeoisie, developed a realism of social protest that emphasized the

representational capacity of certain images over fidelity of the image to reality. At the same time that pessimistic side of the proletariat could be seen in the faces of the workers in Otto Griebel's *Die Internationale* (1928–1930), socialist realism was insistently extolling the virtues of the workers of the Soviet Union.

Gradually, realism distanced itself from the modern project and its utopian construction of the present. Fernand Léger used the languages of modernity to become one of the main proponents of the renewal of the worker as a subject in painting. His series of works on collective leisure time was a singular projection of a utopian society arising from modernity's historical vision of emancipatory linear progress. For example, Léger's *Les Loisirs: Hommage à Louis David* (Leisure: Homage to Louis David, 1948–1949; fig. 2) is an explicit tribute to the painter who had immortalized the leader of the French Revolution in *La mort de Marat* (The Death of Marat, 1793).

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The workers in Ishida's *Toyota Jidōsha Ipsum* (*Toyota Ipsum*, 1996) advertise the first generation of a vehicle for seven passengers made by Toyota and exclusively sold in Japan from 1995 to 2009. Dressed in the uniform of the *salaryman*,[4] the office workers show, by their ages, their predefined roles in the firm's hierarchy, advertising the same product with different gadgets that identify them all as members of a great big family. *Toyota Ipsum* no longer shows the alienating effects of the Fordist production line alluded to in *Beruto Conbeya jō no Hito* (*Conveyor Belt People*, 1996), where workers, stripped of any meaningful relationship with their products, indifferently manipulate interchangeable units of the salaryman prototype.

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4. The Japanese term *salaryman* refers to a white-collar worker or businessperson with exhausting working days that are incompatible with other activities or forms of caring and thus lead to marked physical and mental deterioration. Salarymen give their time, skills, and facets to their company as soon as their formal education comes to an end, generally until retirement.

Fig. 2: Fernand Léger, *Les Loisirs: Hommage à Louis David* (Leisure: Homage to Louis David), 1948–1949

Nor does the painting denounce the growing expansion of the service economy, as in *Ni* (*Cargo*, 1997), where workers and packaged goods merge completely into the supply chain.[5] *Toyota Ipsum* refers to the new mode of alienation as a result of the normalizing of emotional investment where company values must be personified. At a time in history when work, if you have it, is increasingly invasive (and the unpaid search for work, if you don't have it, is equally so), certain strategies in the labor market are profoundly redefining our relation to work, and the development of precarity, with the demand for permanent availability, is exponentially increasing levels of anxiety and indignity.

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Unemployment (1938; fig. 3), a painting by American social realism pioneer Ben Shahn, is one of the most representative images of the financial crash of 1929, which caused US employment figures to drop to an unprecedented level and was, until recently, considered to have been the greatest financial crash in modern history. The group of unemployed in Shahn's work display the worry and lethargy of those who stand in lines waiting for work, and Shahn's pessimism would later influence Ishida. Of Shahn's series *Lucky Dragon* (1958), which the American painted after the irradiation of the Japanese tuna boat *Daigo Fukuryū Maru* (Lucky Dragon) in 1954, Ishida wrote, "I grew up thinking that there was something mysterious about *Lucky Dragon*, and I wanted to be like Ben Shahn. Looking back, I may have won the first prize of the human rights poster because I was painting in the style of Ben Shahn."[6] Shahn favored a personal realism driven by honesty, as a search for truthfulness in aspects of reality that might not be immediately apparent, and by a sense of urgency that constituted what is commonly called "feeling," or pathos, in art. Shahn also claimed that art, as it unsettles reality, creates a demand in the artist to formulate his or her own aesthetic.[7]

Free time has deteriorated along with the way we work. Leisure time today is a mediated experience in which nothing remains of the utopian drive that Paul Lafargue called for in *The Right to Be Lazy* (1883). Technology has perfected the machinery that prevents us from disconnecting and makes us live for and through work, forcing us "to accept the dividend of growing productivity in the form of more consumption, rather than more leisure time."[8] Ishida, in paintings such as *Shachō no Kasa no Shita* (*Under the Company President's Umbrella*, 1996) or *Seiatsu* (*Conquered*, 2004; fig. 4), lucidly registers the damage this leaves.

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Les Loisirs and *Under the Company President's Umbrella* represent two historical moments in the relationship between

5. According to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in contemporary biopolitical production's modes of cognitive and affective work, workers are not only alienated from the end product of their work but from the process of work itself. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

6. Tetsuya Ishida quoted in Masuto Horikiri, "Tetsuya Ishida and His Times," in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 2010), 11.

7. Ben Shahn, "Realism Reconsidered," *Perspecta* 4 (1957): 28–35.

8. David Frayne, *The Refusal of Work: The Theory and Practice of Resistance to Work* (London: Zedbooks, 2015), 84.

Fig. 3: Ben Shahn, *Unemployment*, 1938

work and leisure time, and the contrast between these two moments is inevitably carried through to the way they are formalized. Léger's modernism still evokes confidence in a future of social achievements, optimistically celebrated in community leisure time; Ishida's work portrays with anxiety the certainty of an inexorable reality, a fairground whose swing carousel has lost all its charm, where the men's bodies are trapped in a permanent orbit around the leader, fighting in unbalanced equilibrium against the forces that assail them.

The opposition between realism and modernism was one of the most controversial aesthetic debates of the first half of the twentieth century. Two incompatible visions of reality grounded their arguments either in coherence with the new nonrepresentational time of suprematism, constructivism, and the Bauhaus, or with the collective epic of the Russian Revolution extolled by socialist realism. Literature, rather than art, however, offered some of the most important contributions to a debate that had its beginnings in the Marxist tradition of ideological critique. The polemics of Georg Lukács, a pioneer figure in realist theory, were pitted against those of such eminent intellectual figures as Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor Adorno. Lukács argued that the great realist writers, in their reworking of the matter of their own experience, used abstraction as a means of mediating between appearance and essence. This dialectic penetrated the laws governing objective reality to uncover its contradictions. In contrast, modernism favored an exclusive focus on the more superficial aspects of chaotic reality, and its critique partly reflected a reification of the object and a fragmentation of the subject that could be

Fig. 4: *Seiatsu* (*Conquered*), 2004

associated with capitalist dynamics. Lukács also argued that modernism, in spite of its proclamations of technical and formal innovation, failed at prophetic anticipation, whereas realism unveiled incipient tendencies that had not yet been able to unfold their social potential.[9]

Realism for Brecht was a political, philosophical, and practical matter of human interest.[10] He considered artistic experimentation to be an indispensable condition for the illumination and analysis of social reality. All strategies—including those employed by modernism, such as montage, the interior monologue, and hybrid genres—were adequate if they permitted a historical reality to emerge and thus contributed to revolutionary change. Brecht's confrontation with Lukács arose not only from their divergent views on political militancy but from a more advanced, experimental conception of the forms and intentions of realism.

Adorno criticized the obstinate contempt Lukács showed, in his fervent defense of realism, for the form that constitutes the artwork. Adorno held that the author of *Theory of the Novel* (1920), in disallowing the autonomous development of artistic technique, had misinterpreted the role of art in confronting contemporary culture's crisis of meaning. Adorno claimed that

9. Georg Lukács, "Realism in the Balance," in Theodor Adorno et al., *Aesthetics and Politics: The Key Texts of the Classic Debate within German Marxism* (1977; London: Verso, 2007), 48.

10. Bertolt Brecht, "Bertolt Brecht against Georg Lukács," in *Aesthetics and Politics*, 76.

genuine political art positioned itself against the real, providing a constant critique of it and revealing its contradictions and discontinuities, thus giving rise to a negative form of nonaffirmative, unitary knowledge of the world. Adorno was convinced that social contradictions were part of mediated reality and proposed the negation of a negation that would not overlook the variety of the noncontradictory or simply different. The essence of his dialectic was to avoid complacency and develop a new form of potentiality. Criticism would lay the object of confrontation of thought and political practice under constant siege and thus lead to greater awareness.

Although Lukács, Adorno, and Brecht all agreed that art was a means of understanding historical reality, only Lukács and Adorno considered it to have, particularly in the case of realism and political art, an intrinsically cognitive capacity. Brecht favored a different concept of the political role of aesthetics, and his interpretation of realism contemplated an ideological and political aim in the genre, independent of how it was given form, which would vary according to its time and place.[11]

Frederic Jameson, in *The Antinomies of Realism*, offers a dialectic analysis of realism in literature as a historical process that has its origins in narration and is inextricably bound to the counternarrative impulse typically identified with modernism, although Jameson related this impulse to the manner in which the literary representation of affect conceptualizes time. For Jameson, this particular temporality did not correspond with the present time of the spectator or with the chronological temporality of the narrative but was instead birthed by realism, which favored detailed staging, description, and effective inversion. In such temporality, the narrative is withdrawn, leading to what Alexander Kluge describes as an "assault of the present on the rest of time" and Jameson describes as the emergence of the "reign of affect."[12]

Affect activates the body and eludes language. According to Jameson, the theory of realism is grounded in the dissociation between two phenomena: "identity as a social mark of a relatively objective kind, which specifies individual history and indeed temporal chronology; consciousness as an impersonal field which can probably no longer even be described in terms of subjectivity."[13] The interpenetration we call "affect" therefore alludes to something that is yet to be named, to a new kind of multiplicity that cannot be separated from empathy. Perhaps, then, it is not far-fetched to imagine that the potentiality of affect somehow contributed to the development of the workers' movement in the early twentieth century.

11. Rodney Livingstone, Perry Anderson, and Francis Mulhern, "Presentation IV," in *Aesthetics and Politics*, 148–49.

12. Alexander Kluge, *Der Angriff der Gegenwart gegen die übrige Zeit* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1985); *Der Angriff der Gegenwart gegen die übrige Zeit*, directed by Alexander Kluge (Filmwelt, 1985), documentary film; and Fredric Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism* (London: Verso, 2009), 29. As Jameson points out, his use of the term *affect* refers only to questions of representation and not to the shift in relations and forms of subjectivity some theoreticians posit as a distinction of group identity.

13. Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism*, 78.

Although universalist stereotypes do not constitute reality at any given moment and the demand for the truth may be different in each historical situation, Jameson agrees with Lukács that realism, particularly the realist novel, is profoundly historical. "Realism requires a conviction as to the massive weight and persistence of the present."[14] Thus it can be claimed that historicity is actively implicated in daily life. The effects of the present time provide stimuli that are fixed or captured in the representation of experience from a social perspective.

The opposition between modernism and realism that became a focus of aesthetic debate in the 1920s and 1930s gave rise to many theories about the reflectiveness of the former and the mimetic nature of the latter. From the 1950s to the 1960s, these theories strongly resonated in the antagonism between formalism and historicism that dominated the artistic production of the time. Benjamin Buchloh studied this confrontation in the work of American and European artists and identified an opposition "between a formalist American approach claiming a relative, if not total autonomy from social political and ideological overdetermination, and a European approach that presumably foregrounded these links between artistic production and more general social and ideological formations."[15]

The omnipresent perception of capitalism became fully visible in art practices after World War II with the emergence of pop art and new forms of realism. These movements' focus on the spectacle of the everyday and on actions and temporality catalyzed the historic change in the art paradigm of the 1960s. The intrusion of the real called the autonomy of the modern into question and gave free rein to the experimental exploration of perception, fostering a new attention to the stage and to the present.

Consumer society no longer allowed space for noninstrumentalized object relations, nor was it possible to ignore the dying notion of authorship that serialized industrialism was to anticipate. Little by little, the limits between public and private life became blurred, leading to an inevitable neutralization of the subject as a consequence of the progressive erosion of differentiation. In the absence of subjectivity, objectivity reintroduced the reign of objects into art practice in a new development of realism that threatened modernist formalism. Minimalism combated this and, according to Michael Fried, confused the transcendental "presentness" of art with the mundane "presence" of things.[16] Paradoxically, the literal projection of objectivity foreshadowed the imminent disintegration of the object as a means of diagnosing reality.

14. Ibid., 145.

15. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Formalism and Historicity: Preface" (1977), in *New Realisms: 1957–1962: Object Strategies between Readymade and Spectacle*, exh. cat. (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010), 77.

16. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum*, no. 5 (June 1967): 12–23. For a summary of the article, see Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 70.

The urge toward objectivization was soon to throw into question the notion of alterity that everyday life singularized. In *The Return of the Real* (1996) Hal Foster theorized a shift toward the real in the art practices of the 1990s. The real was evoked socially and in the body. "From a conventionalist regime where nothing is real and the subject is superficial, much contemporary art presents reality in the form of trauma and the subject in the social depth of its own identity."[17] In his genealogical exploration of the return of the real, Foster refers to Warhol's "I want to be a machine" to speak of a subject who is "shocked, who takes on the nature of what shocks him as a mimetic defense against this shock."[18] Foster leans on Jacques Lacan's theory of the traumatic, defined as a failed encounter with the real. As Lacan notes, the real, when it cannot be represented, can only be repeated.[19]

A character who recurs throughout Ishida's work can be identified by his quasi-photographic resemblance in all the paintings and by the suspicion he engenders that he is actually a self-portrait hinting at Ishida's desire to merge into others (*Moji* [*Letters*, 2003], fig. 5). The figure gives off a sort of existential irrevocability in its lack of folds and inseparable bind to the routine of the present. His identity is limited to "being for others," with no future or past projection, no destiny. The paradigmatically impersonal story of his life is no different than everyone else's. His disconnection and the self-denying silence that envelop him are metaphors for a shift in subjectivity, a search for identity in alterity. In Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, the reality of the body involves a relationship to otherness, a perceptive capacity to be among others, not alone.[20] Ishida's character is governed by an uninterrupted present. He is resigned to his destiny, eluding all social contracts. His self-inflicted reclusion is so common in Japan that it is known as *hikikomori* syndrome. Mark Fisher considers the apparent apathy and lack of political engagement among many young people in different capitalist societies today to be closely related to what he calls "reflexive impotence," or the tacit assumption that they can do nothing to change things, together with a certain pathological incapacity to connect with anything other than the internet and its devices.[21] Ishida's character's dysfunctionality, however, does not prevent him from existing in others, in a way that recalls Merleau-Ponty:

> Portraits of others. At first, it was a self-portrait. I tried to make myself—my weak self, my pitiful self, my anxious self—into a joke or something funny that could be

17. Foster, *The Return of the Real*, 142.

18. Ibid., 149.

19. Ibid., 150. Foster cites Jacques Lacan's seminar "The Unconscious and Repetition" (1964), in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1978).

20. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945; New York: Routledge, 1963).

21. Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism* (New York: Zero Books, 2009), 21.

> laughed at. Becoming the object of laughter, or becoming even sadder. It was sometimes seen as a parody or satire referring to contemporary people. As I continued to think about this, I expanded it to include consumers, city-dwellers, workers, and the Japanese people. The figures in the picture expanded toward people that I can feel.[22]

Jameson, in *The Antinomies of Realism*, notes that the present of consciousness is impersonal in some way. He also notes that the postmodern experience is characterized by a "reduction to the body," a temporary isolation that allows us to know "more global waves of generalized sensations." To some extent this idea draws on a manner of formulating affect that Jameson relates to Martin Heidegger's notion of *Stimmung*: "neither subjective nor objective, neither irrational nor cognitive, but rather a constitutive dimension of our being-in-the-world."[23]

The contemporary present is characterized by its anonymity and its phenomenological homogeneity of experience. Affect in this context is an opening for a new realism that favors empathy as an enhanced, representative form of collective presence. This is one of the possible signals of Ishida's painting: its capacity to (unexplicitly) invoke a reality effect able to connect similar existences. *Kenkō Kigu* (*Exercise Equipment*, 1997) shows the experience of running a perpetual race with no end or means of escape—a mode of alienation of a society dominated by work and productivity. Humanity's estrangement from itself is manifested in the hybrid bodies of Ishida's work. Insect and human bodies merge in Kafkaesque

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Fig. 5: *Moji* (*Letters*), 2003

22. Tetsuya Ishida cited by Horikiri, "Tetsuya Ishida and His Times," 13 (notebook from 1999). In his analysis of Étienne Souriau's *Les différents modes d'existence* (The Different Modes of Existence, 1943), Bruno Latour claims that Souriau held that one of the ways a subject can alter him- or herself is to test the other as a mode of existence. Comparing this with Gabriel Tarde's *Monadologie et sociologie* (1895; Paris, Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, 1999), Latour points out that Tarde does not ask how many distinct ways of differing are possible and cites his claim that "To exist is to differ; difference, to tell the truth, is in a certain way the substantial side of things, what they have that is both their very own and what they have in common." See Bruno Latour, "Reflections on Etienne Souriau's *Les différents modes d'existence*," in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, ed. Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman (Melbourne: re.press Australia, 2011), 313.

23. Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism*, 38.

p. 89 couplings (*Kyori* [*Distance*, 1999]) or are split into technological
p. 39 hybrids (*Sūpāmāketto* [*Supermarket*, 1999]), and the mechanized body is presented as a sort of common denominator for the way we think and act in everyday life.

The global financial crisis of 2008–2009 has abruptly undermined our time, imposing unbounded conditions on our social lives beyond the personal. Affect has gained narrative force as an expression of an atrocious reality whose complexity cannot be addressed unless we do so gregariously and which confronts us with the relational nature of individual lives and destinies, highlighting our awareness of multiplicity in its crucial
p. 109 variability (*Zenmō* [*Pubescence*, 2004]). Apathy and resignation objectivize the symptomatic arbitrariness of Ishida's featureless character, who has been sentenced to a lack of vibration and is condemned to incommunication and dearth of attachment, unable to avoid the drama of a life of indistinct vulnerability.

Ishida carefully, precisely describes every object or situation. As a bare act of witnessing, his work acts to anonymously register a contingency that cannot be represented, bringing into play the viewer's affective implication in the artwork. This process of identification is enhanced by Ishida's highly exacting craftsmanship. His pictorial realism opens the viewer to a sort of contagion of affect that, by producing an estrangement, calls on the viewer yet simultaneously causes unease. In some pieces objects are miniaturized. Scaled down yet painted in extremely close detail, their ambiguity is increased. Ishida's self-referential imaginary world can be sheltered within the space of a room and focused without being circumscribed by
pp. 114–115 the subjective (Untitled, 2004). A model train travels through the landscape of a body, whose outstretched hand stops a
pp. 90–91 fatal accident from happening (*Sōsaku* [*Search*, 2001]); a road runs along a long sheet of paper being issued from a printer
pp. 92–93 (Untitled, 2003). Outside space, however, is more hostile. In the urban jungle and its trenches, the vulnerable body awaits its
pp. 43, 108 ambush (*Heishi* [*Soldier*, 1996]; *Futsū* [*Interruption*, 2004]).

The contrast between interior and exterior space recalls other noteworthy polarities in Ishida's work: man/woman, illness/healing, child/adult, life/death. The sorrow of the paid worker invades the wasteland that stands as a background to a self-involved, contagious melancholy. The pressures of an education directed by the imperatives of productivity, competitiveness, and
p. 79 efficiency are revealed in pieces such as *Mebae* (*Awakening*, 1998)
p. 106 or *Tohōnikureru Hito* (Lost, 2001), where the adolescent subject takes stock of his own disorientation in a world dominated by uncontrollable forces. In other images, the underlying search

for identity is bound to a primary need to return to childhood (*Kiro* [*Return Journey*, 2003]) and/or a going back to the repressed scatological (*Kinōsei* [*Functionality*, 1999], fig. 6).

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Ishida's work eventually became more somber as the artist brought out his obsession with the sickly, infected body (Untitled, 2004) and watery, unhealthy atmospheres began to appear (*Taieki* [*Body Fluids*, 2004]). According to Foster, the striving to inhabit a place of total affect drives many artists "to possess the obscene vitality of the wound and to occupy the radical nihility of the corpse."[24] The contemporary preoccupation with trauma, with the sick, amputated, or shattered body (*Kaishū* [*Recalled*, 1998]), painfully signals the divided, precarious subject bound by his prosthetic coupling to postcapitalism.

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pp. 76–77

The plural body in Ishida's work expects no respite from its particular history of confinement and adversity. He exceeds the normal individual and searches in the collective imaginary for the possibility of a normalized representation of alienation, one that strikes at the heart of the present moment. Michel Foucault considered history to be rooted in the body; it is inscribed in the nervous and digestive systems. The body, according to Foucault, is the surface where we are instructed by events, where the self is dissociated. The body is a mass in perpetual collapse; it "is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays, it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances."[25]

Ishida's skeptical, ice-cold, pertinent work is traversed by the factual. It contravenes fiction, which shows through in the inexpressible nightmare of a dysfunctional organism invaded by different devices, pathologically infected, cut into pieces, and threatened by an unfathomable, infinitely exchangeable reality. The anonymous man in his works distills such negativity and impotence that he calls up our empathic response in the face of the horrific circumstances of late capitalism. His historicity lies in his nature as an unknown subject who unconsciously becomes a historical one. In him the viewer may recognize art's dialectical potential, the mechanism that reflects contradictions and is able to impose the appearance of form onto the implausible unreality of the message. Ishida's form and content are in complete correspondence and confront us with the weight and persistence of the present and its historical dimension.

In the final pages of Jameson's *Aesthetics and Politics*, he speculates that realism today might be rewritten in terms of the categories of history and class consciousness; or, more

24. Foster, *The Return of the Real*, 184.

25. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1882), quoted in Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971), in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 153.

precisely, in terms of the processes of reification and totality that have transformed it. Jameson asserts that, whereas alienation dissociates workers from their activity, product, colleagues, and finally their own species, reification affects the individual's cognitive relation with the social whole, manifesting as a "disease of that mapping function whereby the individual subject projects and models his or her insertion into the collectivity."[26]

Reification necessarily aspires to erase class from the social structure, thus helping to introduce a state of anomie. The function of realism in these circumstances, Jameson says, is to "resist the power of reification in consumer society and to reinvent that category of totality which is being systematically undermined by existential fragmentation on all levels of life and social organization today."[27] Realism would therefore incorporate something that has tended to be more concretely present in modernism throughout the dialectic between the two; namely, "an emphasis on violent renewal of perception in a world in which experience has solidified into a mass of habits and automatisms."[28]

Fisher emphasizes that the term *capitalist realism*, which was adopted by German artists in the 1960s to parody socialist realism in painting, could have a more expansive function: "like a pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action."[29] He considers that capitalist realism can be combated

26. Fredric Jameson, "Reflections in Conclusion," in *Aesthetics and Politics*, 212.

27. Ibid., 212.

28. Ibid., 213.

29. Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, 16.

Fig. 6: *Kinōsei* (*Functionality*), 1999

only after it is exposed as indefensible, if its ostensible realism is used to unveil precisely the fact that it is the opposite of what it claims to be (for instance, the widespread idea that capitalism is the only viable economic system). Ishida, trapped in his anodyne existence, points an accusing finger directly at capitalism, without relying on drama or interaction, and takes refuge in introspection. His silence is a reference to the most radical act of expropriation, the seizing of the voice itself, and takes us back to the certainty of a statement without comment.

> This is the chronicle of a box-man.
>
> I am beginning this account in a box. A cardboard box that reaches just to my hips when I put it on over my head. . . .
>
> As far as I know, most box men utilize this quarto box. For if the box has any striking features to it, its special anonymity will suffer. . . .
>
> A society is formed to breed sterilized mice, a child is discovered buried in cement at the construction site of a supermarket, the total number of deserters from troops throughout the world sets a new record, the world seems to be boiling over like a teakettle. One small mishap and the shape of the whole world could change. . . .
>
> The wan ten-o'clock sun flowing in from the window melted into the white of the mortar wall, filling the room, and in it the box seemed like a scooped-out hole. . . .
>
> Actually a box, in appearance, is purely and simply a right-angle parallelepiped, but when you look at it from within it's a labyrinth of a hundred interconnecting puzzle rings. The more you struggle the more the box, like an extra outer skin growing from the body, creates new twists for the labyrinth, making the inner disposition increasingly more complex.[30]

30. Kōbō Abe, *The Box Man: A Novel* (1974), trans. E. Dale Saunders (New York: Random House, 2001), 3, 4, 73, 110, 178.

Nenryō Hokyū no youna Shokuji (*Refuel Meal*), 1996

Bia Gāden Hatsu (*Beer Garden Departure*), 1955

SL ni natta Hito (*Steam Locomotive Man*), 1995

Untitled, 1995

Untitled, 1995

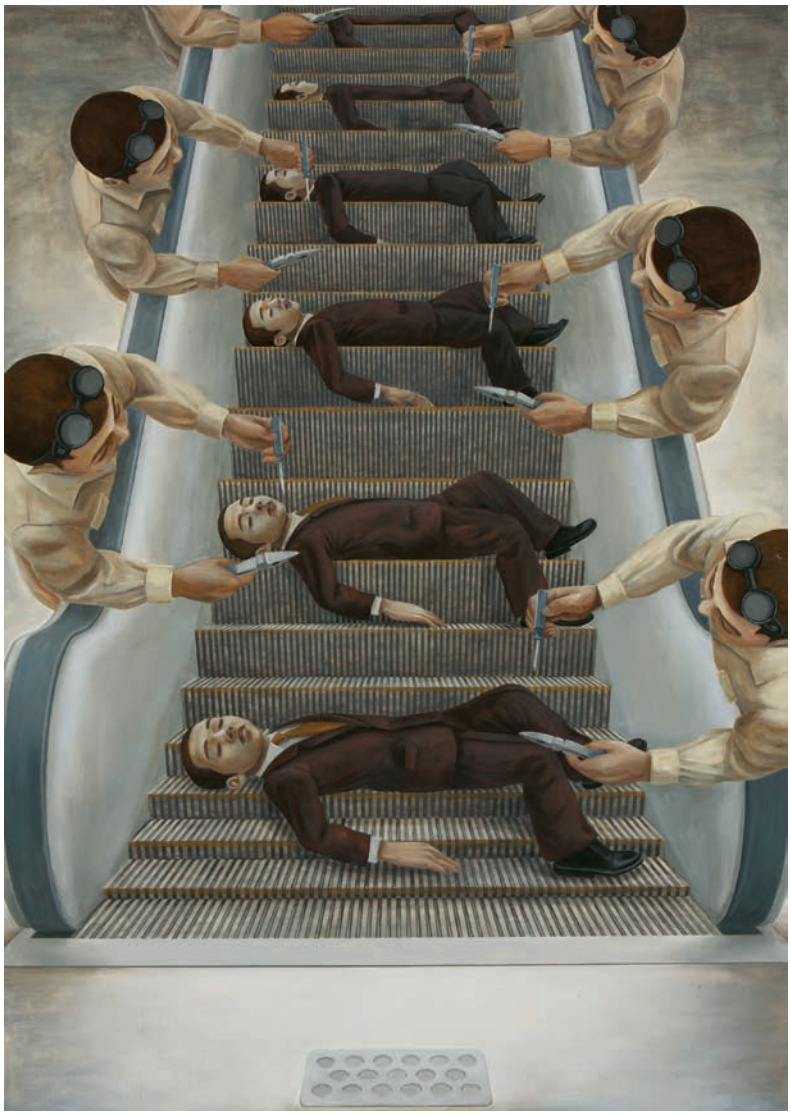
Mino-mushi no Suimin
(*Sleeping Bagworm*), 1995

Dango-mushi no Suimin
(*Sleeping Pill Bug*), 1995

Koi no Yume (*Carp Dream*), 1996

Konbiniensu Sutoa no Boshi-zō
(*Convenience Store Mother and Child*), 1996

Beruto Conbeya jō no Hito
(*Conveyor Belt People*), 1996



Sūpāmāketto (*Supermarket*), 1996

Kenkō Kigu (*Exercise Equipment*), 1997

Sokudo Shinkō (*Speed Faith*), 1996

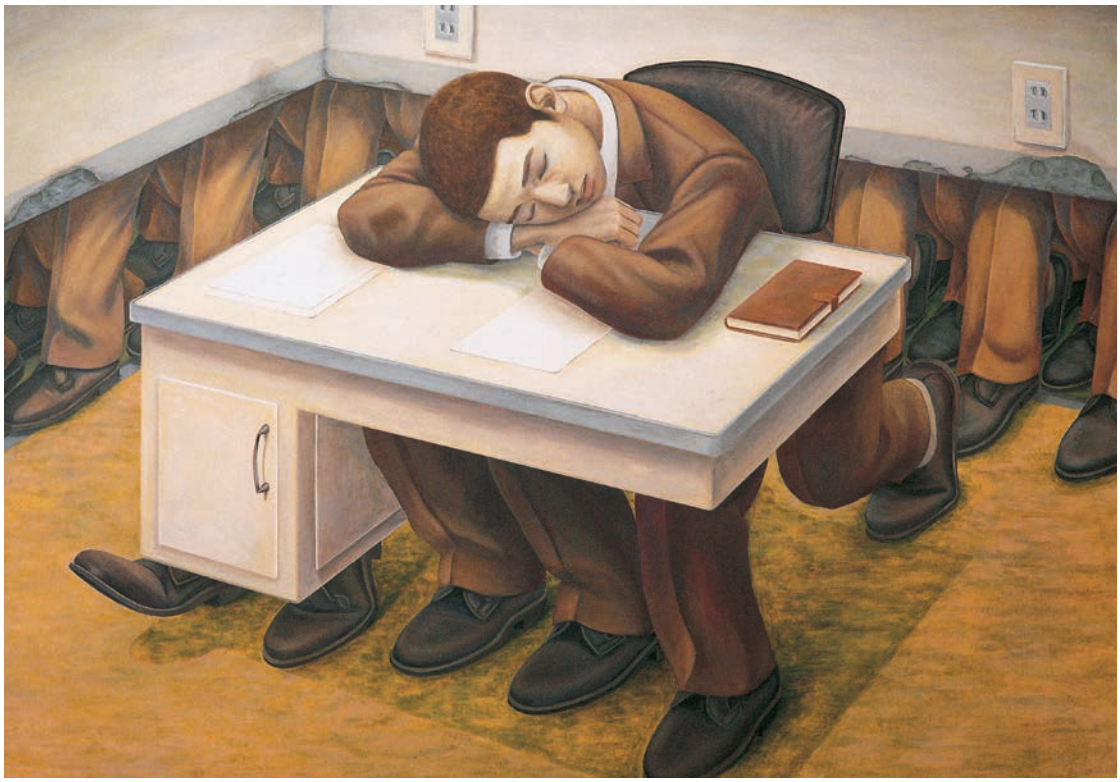
Toire he Nigekomu Hito (*Toilet Refuge*), 1996

Heishi (*Soldier*), 1996

Fu'an na Yume (*Restless Dream*), 1996

Guchi (*Gripe*), 1996

Idō no Yume (*Dream in Motion*), 1996



Tsukawarenaku-natta Biru no Buchō no Isu (*Derelict Building Department Head's Chair*), 1996

Tobenaku-natta Hito (*Person Who Can No Longer Fly*), 1996

Shachō no Kasa no Shita
(*Under the Company President's Umbrella*), 1996

Guchi 2 (*Gripe 2*), 1996–1999

Untitled, 1997

Untitled, 1997

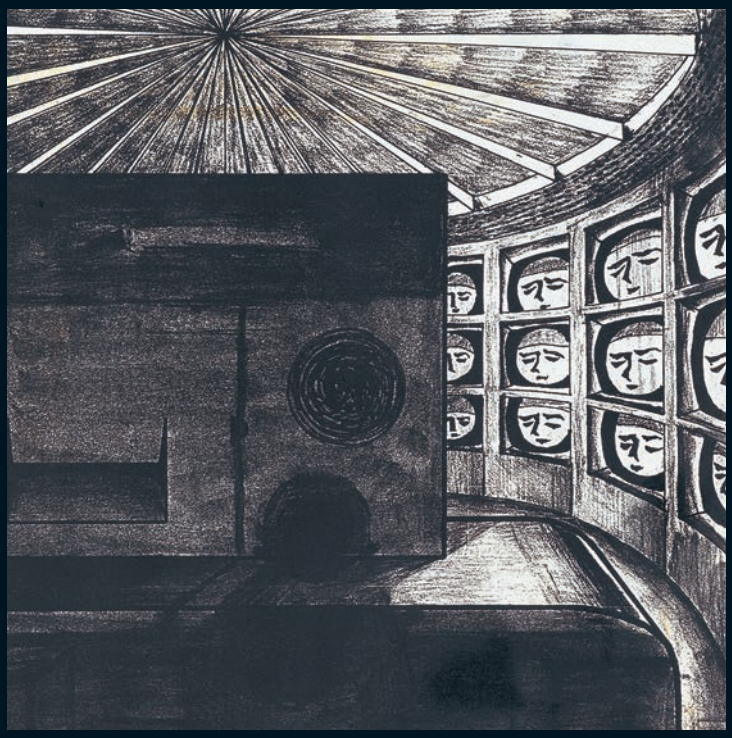
Untitled, 1997

Guchi (*Gripe*), 1997

Ni (*Cargo*), 1997

Toyota Jidōsha Ipsum
(*Toyota Ipsum*), 1996


IPSUM
7
SRS
SR. TOYOTA
7
SRS
IPSUM
7
SRS
大人が7人
乗れちゃうの?
大人が7人
乗れちゃうぜ!
GOAってなあに?
安全ボディー
エアバッグ
想像以上の
な走りです。
TOYOTA
ぼくたち
いつもの7人組。
イプサムだったら
みんな乗れちゃう。
TOYOTA
TOYOTA
IPSUM
TOYOTA
IPSUM



The Never-Coming End of the World: Tetsuya Ishida's Postcataclysmic Vision

Noi Sawaragi

Despite depicting so many industrial machines and workers, Tetsuya Ishida's paintings do not present any scenes of production. Instead, they present all too brief rest (*Dango-mushi no Suimin* [*Sleeping Pill Bug*] and *Mino-mushi no Suimin* [*Sleeping Bagworm*], both 1995), unwinding after work (*Izakaya hatsu* [*Izakaya Departure;* fig. 1] and *Bia Gāden Hatsu* [*Beer Garden Departure*], both 1995), medical treatment for overwork and illness (*Koi no Yume* [*Carp Dream*] and *Beruto Conbeya jō no Hito* [*Conveyor Belt People*], 1996), eating and crapping on the job (*Nenryō Hokyū no youna Shokuji* [*Refuel Meal*] and *Toire he Nigekomu Hito* [*Toilet Refuge*], both 1996), and hectic commuting (*Guchi* [*Gripe*], 1996). The workers' expressionless faces show them barely managing to escape work or else already too deeply wounded psychologically to be of much use. Likewise, Ishida's striking *Kyori* (*Distance,* 1999) and *Shison* (*Offspring*, 1999; fig. 2) from his later years may no longer directly invoke the workplace, but they come from the same nonwaking self, the unreal time of dreams that still greatly informs these major works. All of these paintings are post-productive, post-labor landscapes. Why did Ishida paint such scenes over and over again?

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Page 58: Untitled, n.d.

The thirty-plus years of Ishida's life (1973–2004) correspond to an interval of sweeping transition in Japan. Short though his lifetime was, most Japanese who lived through this same period shared his experience of the unsettling changes, a common background that helps explain why Ishida's paintings transcend mere personal expression and continue to resonate with so many.

By 1973, the year of Ishida's birth, Japan had long since recovered from unconditional defeat in World War II and occupation by the Allied forces. It had risen from the ashes of incendiary bombing to undergo a "miraculous" era of rapid

Fig. 1: *Izakaya hatsu* (*Izakaya Departure*), 1995

Fig. 2: *Shison* (*Offspring*), 1999

economic growth, culminating in the 1960s (which saw Tokyo host the first-ever Olympics in Asia), whereupon the powerful national push inevitably began to slow down. By 1970, when Expo'70 was staged in Osaka against the tumultuous backdrop of the Vietnam War, the growth of Japan's "homegrown" industrial technology had delivered such a peaceable standard of living that expectations for the future presumed the twenty-first century would see an end to all war and achieve "progress and harmony for mankind" (the official Expo theme).

Naturally, things did not go so smoothly. Soon after the close of the Expo, the trade-off for this industrial technology became apparent as environmental pollution was discovered throughout Japan and radical leftist factions went underground to carry out murderous purges and terrorist bombings, plunging the period into darkness. To top it all, the sudden 1973 oil shock threatened energy supplies to import-dependent Japan and threw people into a panic. Society-wide uncertainties cast long shadows over the cultural sphere. Popular tastes ran to doomsday readings such as science fiction novelist Sakyo Komatsu's *Nihon Chinbotsu* (*Japan Sinks*), cartoonist Jiro Tsunoda's supernatural thriller *Ushiro no Hyakutaro*, or essayist Ben Goto's sensational *Nostradamus no Daiyogen* (*Prophesies of Nostradamus*), followed in 1974 by an unprecedented "occult boom" after celebrity psychic Uri Geller visited Japan.

All these dystopian developments ran in direct opposition to the bright future foreseen by Expo '70, leaving many Japanese fully willing to believe a sixteenth-century French psalm about a 1999 apocalypse (as set forth in Goto's book, which sold a record one million copies in only three months). Incredible as it may seem today, a vast sector of the public

seriously feared the prophesy and counted their numbered days until 1999.

Even during the 1980s "bubble economy," which brought such new heights of affluence to Japan that people could spend with no thought for tomorrow, there was no idealistic view toward historical progress, no elated hopes for the future as in the era of rapid economic growth. Nor did speculation in hyperinflated land values have any basis in real productivity. Thus, come 1991, the bubble burst.

The worst outcome of the doomsday thinking that took root in 1973 and then intensified as the economy was recklessly overheated—and which figures symbolically in paintings such as *Hōmonsha* (*Visitor*, 1999)—was the horrific 1995 sarin gas attack in which quasi-Buddhist Aum cult members dispersed toxic chemicals on early morning commuter subway trains, randomly killing and crippling many victims. The cult leader, Shoko Asahara, had been greatly influenced by the doomsday prophesy. During the "bubble" years, he dramatically expanded his small circle of yoga ascetics to include many highly educated converts with specialized knowledge and skills. The headgear Asahara's disciples wore in order to receive his brain waves are somehow reminiscent of Ishida's robotic "salarymen" in such images as *Keitai Denwa Robo to Nōto-gata Pasokon Shōnen* (*Mobile Phone Robot and Notebook PC Boy*, 1996) or *Shachō no Kasa no Shita* (*Under the Company President's Umbrella*, 1996). Asahara schemed to trigger Armageddon and multiply the panic in order to topple the government. The immediate outcome of the sarin gas attack, however, was a sweeping crackdown on the Aum elite and the arrest of Asahara (whose death sentence was only carried out in 2018) thereby finally terminating his absurd gambit. Yet even with the failure of his 1995 Armageddon, four years ahead of the 1999 Nostradamus prophesy, this end of the world that did not happen left the Japanese public to face the grim reality of massive bad debts and the hardship years of recovery from recession—a "never-ending norm" (*owari-naki nichijo*) in the words of sociologist Shinji Miyadai.

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In that sense, it is extremely curious that Ishida's ten-year art career came to the fore in 1995. That same year Microsoft launched Windows 95, hailing the widespread popularization of computers, formerly the province of a rare few, and the rapid transformation of the workplace. The stage was already set. The "bubble" of hollow speculation signified that Japan's productivity was well past its peak, leaving financial gamesmanship—or "wealth tech" (*zai teku*) in the parlance of the time—as the only attractive business model. Otherwise solvent

enterprises were lured into serial short-term investments, even as manufacturers had to restructure and automate to weather the recession, replacing assembly-line workers with computer-controlled robots in an all-out pursuit of zero-waste superhuman efficiency. Meanwhile, Japan experienced a marked growth in service sector spending on home and leisure activities instead of material production. By now everyone seemed to be supporting everyone else's lifestyles. As a result, old-school laborers became a thing of the past—illustrated, for example, in Ishida's *Tsukawarenaku-natta Biru no Buchō no Isu* (*Derelict Building Department Head's Chair*, 1996)—heaps of analog machinery were scrapped as obsolete—*Taiki* (*Standby*, 1999)—and living as such morphed into a blur of pastimes—*Kinōsei* (*Functionality*, 1999)—that corporations attempted ever so efficiently to provide at every waking hour—*Kaishū* (*Recalled*, 1998)—a new business model of mass control.

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The post-productive, post-labor landscape of Ishida's paintings emerged as an outgrowth of those changing times, an emblematic vision shared by the public at large. At the same time, he created an unflinchingly realistic picture of the noncataclysmic limbo in which the Japanese were marooned in the post-1999 period. In this sense, his images are by no means the forays into surrealism they might seem at first. Instead, inasmuch as Ishida observed and coolly reproduced the austere reality before his eyes, his paintings can be seen as unique allegories in the manner of Édouard Manet, who unabashedly portrayed the real Paris of prostitutes and poverty during the late-nineteenth-century belle epoque, when academic salons held sway.

In Ishida's case, his post-productive, post-Armageddon images are a shorthand for the logistics of Japanese society (and the predominance of highly specialized services). When sending parcels by home delivery (*takuhai*) in Japan, both sender and recipient can specify not only the date but even preferred hours for delivery; and if the recipient is away, the delivery agent will repeatedly attempt to redeliver, leaving slips with contacts and codes to enable the updating of hours. Likewise, Japanese convenience stores (*konbini*)—which are less independent stores than terminals in a nationwide distribution network—gather data on which class of customer bought which product at which times from which shelf to help optimize merchandise stocking for the immediate clientele. Or again, since moving households requires shifting huge quantities of possessions to clear the way for large appliances and furnishings, movers continually undergo training to learn how to complete even

the most demanding job in a single day (there's even a moving company called Removal Art.)

Broadly speaking, none of these businesses produce anything. The delivery driver merely brings things, the convenience store reshelves things, and the movers take things away. These are otherwise commonplace activities that should not require much training. But, now monetized for their well-primed efficiency, these jobs in practice tend to dehumanize those involved. Ishida's images liken the routine of buying goods to automation—*Sūpāmāketto* (*Supermarket*, 1996)—and depict shopping for snack foods as maternal care—*Konbinien-su Sutoa no Boshi-zō* (*Convenience Store Mother and Child*, 1996). He shows suffocating "salarymen" with heads shoved into tidy shelves of retail products—Untitled (1997)—or boxed into packing materials—*Ni* (*Cargo*, 1997), Untitled (1) (1998), *Haitatsu* (*Delivery*, 1999)—all typical post-productive, post-Armageddon visions rooted in the common personal experience of every Japanese. Note, however, the curious congruence between Ishida's brand of (sardonic) humor and his rigorous powers of observation: the *Visitor* (1999; fig. 3) who suddenly comes to the front door in an uneventful 1999 preempted by the Aum cult's Armageddon embodies a play on words—the nautilus (*aum-gai*) shell is a homophone for Aum—while simultaneously suggesting a *takuhai* (delivery).

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In addition to reflecting the background of troubled times in Japan, much of the characteristic imagery of Ishida's paintings—arrangement, transportation, and replacement—reflects what goes into art exhibitions. Unlike in the West where museums enjoy a privileged independent position, art in Japan has largely been the province of commerce. Department stores at the height of the bubble economy even set aside part of their retail space to operate full-blown museums, often to bizarre effect. For example, when Seibu Department Store's in-house Seibu Museum (now the Sezon Museum of Modern Art), a pioneering showcase for contemporary art, held Japan's first major Anselm Kiefer retrospective in 1993, only a single partition wall separated the ancient relic–like tableaux from a sales counter promoting the latest cosmetics.

Take away the special "museum" format (behind such seemingly odd juxtapositions of high culture and consumerism) and we may cite the long-standing precedent of open-door commercial expertise at mounting changing displays in ad hoc spaces. Here again the requisite activities are arrangement, transportation, and replacement, not production. Which makes the scenes in Ishida's paintings something close to temporary

Fig. 3: *Hōmonsha* (*Visitor*), 1999

department store displays. The frequent appearance of boxes and box-like spaces, albeit not principal figures in themselves, are essential to the mutable, stackable, and replaceable character of the imagery. Considered in this way, both Ishida's art and museum exhibits may be seen to function in a mercantile mode.

Ishida would no doubt have been pleased to see his oeuvre presented and appreciated as authentic works of museum art. At the same time, the inclusion of his paintings as individual parts in the museum space makes the entire exhibition seem like another of his paintings. I cannot help but think that Ishida must have painted these pictures with that in mind.

Self-Portrait or Alienation

Tamaki Saito

Who Is Tetsuya Ishida?

My first encounter with Tetsuya Ishida's painting was gentle but left an impact.

His work is easy to understand at first sight, because it looks like traditional surrealism. In his paintings, men with identical faces and expressions of embarrassment or resignation are shown in miserable situations against backgrounds that suggest a dark, moist, cold atmosphere. Some of the men are fused with toilet bowls or school buildings, some are dismantled and packed in boxes, some are being fed through a nozzle thrust into their mouth. The paintings—satiric caricatures of the varieties of human alienation in modern society—are not likely to be misunderstood.

Tetsuya Ishida was born in 1973 in Yaizu, Japan, and died in 2005 in Tokyo. A member of Japan's "lost generation," he graduated in 1996 from Musashino Art University in Tokyo, becoming a painter during the "employment ice age," a time of nationwide economic recession that lasted throughout the 1990s. Those who sought employment during this "lost decade" after the collapse of the economic bubble often found only irregular employment as many Japanese corporations tightened their hiring of new employees. Many so-called NEETs (Not currently engaged in Education, Employment, or Training) and *hikikomori* emerged during this period.

Page 66: Untitled, n.d.

After a Japanese public television art program presented Ishida's works in 2006, the response from viewers was tremendous. Many people expressed strong empathy for his work, and Ishida, a year after his death, suddenly became one of most famous young painters in Japan. This phenomenon left a strong impression on me. Why were so many people moved by Ishida's work?

Self-Portraits?

Many of Ishida's paintings are said to be self-portraits (something he himself denied). Most painters do at least one self-portrait, and their charm often derives from the painter's narcissism. However, I have never seen "self-portraits" that are as far from narcissistic as are Ishida's pictures.

"Every motif in my mind that I wanted to draw seemed to share a similar point of view. Based on the viewpoint, I named the title of my exhibition *Tadayou Hito* (*Drifter*)."[1] What is expressed on the *Drifter*'s faces is neither embarrassment

1. Tetsuya Ishida, panel text for the exhibition *Drifter*, Guardian Garden, Ginza, Tokyo (1996).

nor sorrow nor anger nor resignation but "emptiness," which seems to have become indistinguishable from gentleness. The figures have no will and no resistance. They no longer even express their intention *not* to express their will. They have been deprived of their liberty in its various forms. But is it mere alienation? As is obvious in the motif of *Toire he Nigekomu Hito* (*Toilet Refuge*, 1996) or *Okujō he Nigekomu hito* (*Rooftop Refugee*, 1996) they are trying to escape *to alienation*.

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As a clinician, I have met many young people who live alienation day by day. Many no longer have the will to fight alienation. They are fully aware that they themselves are complicit in the structure of alienation, that its causes are within themselves. Some have become *hikikomori* (socially withdrawn). In September 2016, the Cabinet of Japan reported that 541,000 Japanese adolescents were in a socially withdrawn state without psychosis. In many cases, the social withdrawal lasts for years. As a specialist of *hikikomori*, I have been treating these adolescents for over thirty years.

The *hikikomori* do not work or participate in any form of education and frequently remain in their rooms. They have no relationships outside their family. Almost all *hikikomori* are aware that their behavior and thoughts are irrational. That is, they know their behavior is selfish and that they depend too much on their parents. They know they should leave home to find work. Yet, they persist in withdrawing from all social relationships.

Hikikomori is a painful condition, so some patients seek relief on the internet or in online gaming. The anonymity of the network is a source of relief. Although Ishida does not depict the *hikikomori*, the same feelings of relief can be seen in his paintings; for example, *Mino-mushi no Suimin* (*Sleeping Bagworm*, 1995) and *Dango-mushi no Suimin* (*Sleeping Pill Bug*, 1995) seem to show a temporary "relief" combined with bottomless anxiety. Is there a path to unwavering relief, though? After encountering Ishida's work, I finally felt like I understood the solitude and loneliness of the "lost generation" to which he himself belonged.

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Character—Influence of Japanese Subculture

Looking at Ishida's paintings, I realized that the "self-portrait" they present is not exactly realistic, despite the richly reflected atmosphere. This is not a problem of technique. Ishida had enough skill to paint a realistic portrait, which is why the "faces" in his pictures have such an intrinsic uniqueness.

> I have strong empathy for others' pain, suffering, sorrow, anxiety, and solitude. I want to digest such feelings and express them through my unique method.[2]
> [Alienation] is caused by human beings and is inescapable. I would like to make it acceptable by joking, self-mocking, and irony.[3]
> I am interested in the movements of emotions, the motivations for action, so I emphasize facial and bodily expressions, light, color, etc., rather than the motif.[4]

Ishida clearly intended to create a "unique face." That is why I was surprised by the gap between the painted face and his real face. Why did Ishida continue to paint self-portraits that did not resemble himself?

> Perhaps these "self-portraits" are "self-portraits of others."[5]

The world of (Japanese) contemporary art is going through an unprecedented "character" boom. Takashi Murakami, Makoto Aida, Yoshitomo Nara, and others who work with subcultural memes have created many characters inspired by Japanese manga and anime. The origin of this boom was likely Murakami's *Mr. DoB.* Although Ishida was not a so-called *otaku* (the Japanese term for people with obsessive interests, particularly in games, anime, and manga), he was strongly influence by Japanese subculture. His favorite manga artist was Yoshiharu Tsuge, an innovator who wrote the surrealistic comic *Neji-shiki* (*Screw Style*). Tsuge's and Ishida's works share the same feeling of hopelessness. Ishida's painting *Keitai Denwa Robo to Nōto-gata Pasokon Shōnen* (*Mobile Phone Robot and Notebook PC Boy*, 1996; fig. 1) was clearly inspired by Mitsuteru Yokoyama's *Tetsujin 28-gō* (*Iron Man No. 28*, 1956; fig. 2), in which boy detective Shotaro Kaneda controls a giant robot with a small remote control. Motifs fusing people with toilet bowls and other objects were likely inspired by Daijiro Morohoshi's short comic *Seibutsu Toshi* (*Bio City*) or Shinya Tsukamoto's movie *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*. And while I do not know if he ever watched it, almost all Japanese artists of Ishida's generation share a strong empathy for the anime series *Shin Seiki Evangerion* (*Neon Genesis Evangelion*; or *Eva*).

Fourteen-year-old Shinji Ikari is one of main characters in *Eva*. Unlike traditional anime heroes, he is an introverted boy and reluctant to fight with enemies. He has no self-confidence, and he dislikes himself because he believes no one will approve of him. He fights alien-like monsters unwillingly and

2. Note from Ishida's sketchbook (1999).

3. Ibid.

4. Ishida, panel text (1996).

5. Tetsuya Ishida (2000) cited in Masato Horikiri, "Tetsuya Ishida and His Times", *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*, exh. cat. (Tokyo, Kyuryudo, 2010): 13.

Fig. 1: *Keitai Denwa Robo to Nōto-gata Pasokon Shōnen* (*Mobile Phone Robot and Notebook PC Boy*), 1996

sometimes defeats them. But these experiences never help him grow up, because he cannot break out of his character in the world of *Eva*. Shinji is a typical exemplar of Japanese boys who belong to the "lost generation."

I coined the phrase "self-harming narcissism" for Shinji. He keeps telling himself he is weak, a coward, and unworthy of affection. But sometimes he bursts out when he can no longer tolerate the humiliation. If he truly believed himself worthless, however, he would never react to humiliation. I thus interpret his self-harming words as an expression of a distorted narcissism. This "self-harming narcissism" is broadly shared among the "lost generation," and I can sense its touch in the self-harming motifs of Ishida's paintings.

Another subcultural influence on Ishida's work, perhaps the strongest, is "character." In this context, "character" is often a symbolic entity that has been imbued with an imperfect personality as the artist's alter ego. Ishida's graphical "self-portrait" does not seem to be a manga-like "character." However, a core attraction of Ishida's work is the intensity of a single face repetitively propagated. Ishida's "self-portrait" is his signature; it provides the strong context for his work. We call the "face" that decides the meaning of a work its "character." I believe Ishida's "self-portrait" is a "self-portrait character" that he created as a way to dialogue with himself.

Alienation as a Character

On Sunday, June 8, 2008, a mass murder took place in Tokyo's Akihabara shopping quarter. Tomohiro Katō, a twenty-five-year-

Fig. 2: Mitsuteru Yokoyama, *Tetsujin 28-gō* (also known as *Ironman No. 28* or *Gigantor*), July 1956

old, drove a truck into a crowd, killing three people and injuring two. He then stabbed at least twelve people with a dagger, killing four and injuring eight. After his arrest, investigative sources quoted him as telling the police, "I came to Akihabara to kill people. I am tired of the world. Anyone was okay."[6]

During the 2000s indiscriminate murders were sporadically perpetrated by young people like Katō. Many of the murderers claimed not to care who the victim was. However, in their claims that "anyone was okay," I also hear, "I do not care who the perpetrator is." I do not know whether this is a consequence of "alienation," but modern young people are beginning to live a certain anonymity phase. They feel they are replaceable parts in the social system. "I do not care . . ." reflects the mood of young people who cannot escape anonymity even by committing the most serious crimes.

In addition, the image of identity that is most real for the young generation is "character." So-called individuality and uniqueness are being replaced by it. Modern alienation no longer means merely becoming anonymous but "being alienated as a character." Contemporary Japanese adolescents communicate with their friends by using *kyara*, a unique persona or character (*kyara* is a shortened form of the Japanese pronunciation of the English word *character*). *Kyara*, however, is a replaceable, replicable image like a manga or anime character. Ishida repeatedly depicted such alienation in his early works.

"Alienation as a character" also means voluntarily selecting an alienated character. It is a situation in which people are anonymized while presenting a face of their own choosing.

I believe paintings exist "to draw a face." Whether a still life or a landscape painting, the picture inevitably expresses

6. Tomohiro Katō cited in *Asahi Shimbun*, June 8, 2008, http://www.asahi.com/special2/080609/TKY200806080098.html (accessed February 17, 2019).

a visage (maybe the painter's own face). Therefore, to achieve excellence in painting is to draw an attractive visage. Ishida drew a realistic visage of the contemporary era as a "self-portrait character" that repeats within the frame.

Artists like Saints

In his last years, Ishida's painting repeatedly featured a child motif. Its face, however, is not another copy of the self-portrait character. Simultaneously, the theme of protection starts to emerge in his paintings. Especially impressive is an untitled work from 2000 in which a firefighter is extending a rescue hand from the basket of a ladder car. Ishida repeatedly painted this motif. Beside the firefighter is a child who has already been rescued. The firefighters' hands are thus reaching to the next child to be saved. Ishida himself is often thought to have been "a child who needs to be saved," which makes this motif almost too painful, as if implying he is in such great trouble that even a firefighter's ladder truck can barely reach him. I am less certain that "salvation" has failed. What is not in doubt is that Ishida never abandoned his prayers for salvation, his wish to be bailed out.

In the last year of his life, Ishida said, "I want to be painter, not an illustrator." His painting became increasingly meaningless, more and more nonsensical, however. Supposedly, he was suffering from mental illness. He reportedly told his friends, "Someone is watching over me" and "Someone is pursuing me."[7] But he never sought help.

7. See Isamu Hirabayashi's essay elsewhere in this catalogue, 117–123.

Although I cannot definitively diagnose Ishida, I think he was approaching schizophrenia. The motifs he painted are consistent with that illness. Schizophrenic patients cannot distinguish self and other. They hear their inner voice as outside voices (auditory hallucination). In Ishida's early works, a primary motif is a person fused with an object. But in his final works, he frequently depicted the self as a nested structure. For example, in *Kiro* (*Return Journey*, 2003), he painted a man's face as a large cavity. From within the cavity, a small child looks out. With this image of nested selves (man and child are almost certainly meant to be the same), Ishida sought to confront his own image, his sense of his own deeply nested self. I think his schizophrenic condition was caused by this struggle.

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His "creative note" includes the following: "I am strongly drawn to saintly artists. I mean people who believe that each brushstroke will save the world or can represent the suffer-

ing of humanity in the face of a sheep. They make me aware that I'm just a philistine."[8] These words remind me of a story told by Hiromi Toyoda, Ishida's ex-lover. She said they broke up because Ishida told her, "I'm so happy being with you that I cannot paint anymore." Ishida voluntarily drove himself toward suffering (in addition to breaking off his relationship with Toyoda, he refused monetary support from his parents and worked a part-time, midnight job in a factory to pay for his living expenses). Like the saints, Ishida dedicated his life to painting instead of worldly happiness.

In 1993, the first exhibition of outsider art in Japan, *Parallel Visions: Modern Artists and Outsider Art*, was held at the Setagaya Art Museum in Tokyo. Ishida, shocked by what he saw, told his friends, "I can never reach them because I'm not suffering from mental illness."[9] But he was undoubtedly fascinated by outsider art. I think he idealized saints as outsiders who spend all of their life working for art. Although not an outsider artist himself, Ishida was one of the few insiders who could approach the intensity of outsider art.

We regret Ishida's early death and the loss of his great talent. Were he alive today, I would ask him, "How do you look at Japanese society after the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami?" "How do you feel about so many people being fascinated by your painting?" "What kinds of pictures will you draw from now on?"

8. Tetsuya Ishida (June 1999) cited in Yūzō Ueda, "The Life and Times of Tetsuya Ishida: Confession and Spirit," *Tetsuya Ishida*, exh. cat. (Hong Kong: Gagosian Gallery, 2004), 73.

9. See Hirabayashi's essay elsewhere in this catalogue, 117–123.

Untitled, 1997

Kaishū
(*Recalled*)
1998


REAR

Untitled (1), 1998

Mebae (*Awakening*), 1998

Busshoku (*Browsing*), 1998

Sesshoku (*Contact*), 1998

Bunkai (*Disassembly*), 1999

Fusei (*Fatherhood*), 1999

Shūjin
(*Prisoner*)
1999

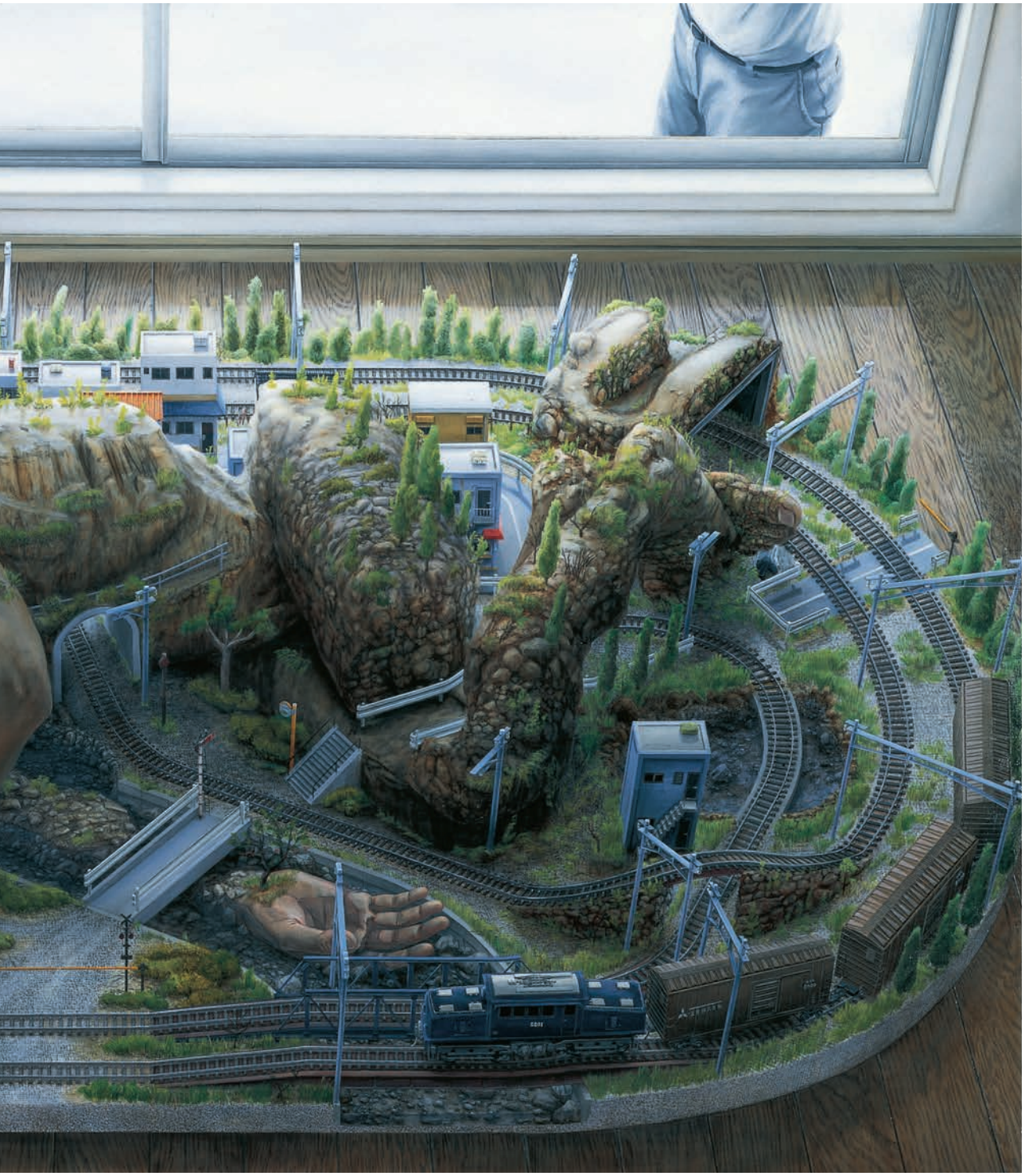
Untitled, n.d.
Untitled, n.d.

Kōkyō-butsu (*Public Property*), 1999

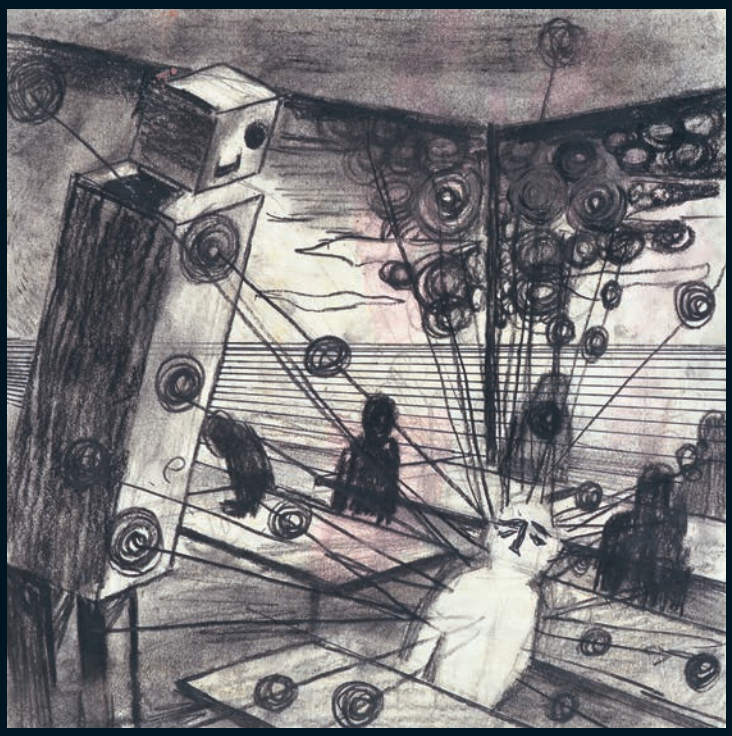
Untitled, 2001

Kyori (*Distance*), 1999

Sōsaku (*Search*), 2001



Untitled, 2003



Self-Portrait of Another

Kuniichi Uno

Which Machines?

Mythology is full of creatures that are half human and half animal, bird, or fish. But the mythology of our era primarily consists of beings that are half human, half machine: beings inserted into endless, incessant connections between humanity and technological objects. In the art of Tetsuya Ishida, there are human beings crossed with locomotives, bicycles, sinks, chairs, buildings, airplanes, boxes, screws, cars, bulldozers, or fans. The "machinic" connection persisted in the artist's imagination, although there is also no shortage of couplings with insects, jellyfish, shellfish, crayfish, sea horses, and other animals. Ishida's imaginary world is pervaded by such coupled figures and by osmosis between human and nonhuman entities, between the human body and technological products, between, on the one hand, the fragility of flesh and the face and, on the other hand, the machines and objects that imprison, trap, paralyze, torture, and mutilate them. On rare occasions, though, the osmosis is euphoric; for example, the merging of jellyfish and human may represent a return to the womb (*Kurage no Yume* [*Jellyfish Dream*], 1997). Images of sleep are also often euphoric for Ishida, even if they are indistinguishable from images of death.

Page 94: Untitled, n.d.

A child can play with a machine quite joyfully, connecting his or her body to it and thus constituting another machine altogether. Children enjoy inserting themselves into a world of machines. Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* makes them laugh. But they quickly begin to discover the terror of this "mecanosphere." In Ishida's works, the relations between humans and machines seem extremely ambivalent. The body of the young man who appears throughout the artist's work is often fragmented, imprisoned, or abused. Who can fail to see here a representation of the body as alienated by the universal incursion of machines into our society? Richard Lindner, in his painting *Boy with Machine* (1954, fig. 1), expresses, on the other hand, the joy of this connection between a large boy and the metallic presence of machines. Fernand Léger similarly expressed the joy of machine life in his art and sought to derive a new aesthetic and transformative power from this osmosis between humanity and the machine. Painting a "Machine-Man" has the ability to create a new aesthetic power, despite all the negative aspects of alienation (in the case of Ishida, alienation can effectively mean "becoming a stranger to oneself"). Ishida's frequent representation of machines, of the machine man, as sad and painful should not be understood

Fig. 1: Richard Lindner, *Boy with Machine*, 1954

to belie the machinic qualities of his own life as an artist. The machinic was a driving force behind his creative production, and the repetition of a single figure forms part of the machine that sparks his imagination.

Looking without Looking

Earlier in his career, the young draftsman with a singular gift for caricature wrote, "Whoever has felt sadness completely is on his way to something meaningless—and very warm."[1] The style of Ben Shahn, Ishida's social and humanist inspiration, left its mark on him. Ishida's flair for caricature would continue. He would never cease to be obsessed with the cruelty of consumption society, of technology and information, of its body- and soul-penetrating violence. In setting out to become a professional artist, Ishida was also forced to work as a proletarian—as a laborer or a security guard. Those who discovered

1. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (ca. June–November 1995), in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebook* (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 2013), 257.

and first interpreted his works were primarily struck by the social conscience they expressed or by their questioning of the catastrophic ravages of Japan's ultramodern society. However, Ishida did not paint solely to express the social and historical conditions of "postmodern" Japan. He was increasingly drawn to the particularities of everyday life, to what could be found in a more personal dimension. Each of his images bears witness to inner fault lines, becoming a kind of fractured self-portrait. *Kiro* (*Return Journey*, 2003), a painting from his final period, is representative of this. The face has an irregular black oval cut out of it. In the upper right of this hole sits a child who is looking back at the painter (and at the person who sees the painting).

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The same figure is repeated in most of Ishida's works. "This male figure always appears (in my paintings). However, it is not a self-portrait," he writes.[2] This almost childlike adolescent is simultaneously pure, sad, anxious, sleepy, and devoid of personality. His principal activity is to look stunned, gaze unfocused, unsure what to look at. This endlessly repeated figure is one of the elements of the success of Ishida's art. By dint of being repeated, it acquires a strange impersonal and expressive quality and power. This character must be absolutely childlike to be stunned by what he sees. Everything is foreign, its meaning unknown to him. He is unable to distinguish between toys and machines. Impassive in situations that are often cruel, he does nothing but look—he is a witness, a privileged observer, but also neutral, naive, and unable to identify what he is looking at.

Ishida was deeply concerned with social questions, with the anxiety and loneliness of city dwellers and workers. In one of his notebooks, he writes, "I'm strongly drawn to saintly artists. I mean people who believe that each brushstroke will save the world or can represent the suffering of humanity in the face of a sheep. They make me aware that I'm just a philistine."[3] His "self-portraits" must be portraits of *everyone*: "When I think about what to paint, I close my eyes and imagine myself from birth to death. But what then appears is human beings, the pain and anguish of society, its anxiety and loneliness, things that go far beyond me. That is what I draw in my self-portraits."[4]

Even at the beginning of his career as a graphic artist and caricaturist, he considered his works to be "self-portraits." In these caricatures that are really self-portraits, the satirical impulse is turned against himself. This is what he sought in his efforts to capture a deeper "personal" truth through his drawings. But he felt the need to go further and gradually turned his self-portrait into "the self-portrait of another"; that

2. Tetsuya Ishida, "Painting Is Me," in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete* (Tokyo: Kyuryudo, 2010), 124; originally published as "Naze hataraku no ka," *Kamone*, no. 400 (November 2001).

3. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (ca. June 1999), in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebook*, 252. The translation is from Yūzō Ueda, "The Life and Times of Tetsuya Ishida: Confession and Spirit," in *Tetsuya Ishida* (Hong Kong: Gagosian Gallery, 2014), 73.

4. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (ca. February 1996), cited in Kiyoshi Ejiri, "Itami toshiteno Chizu," in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebook*, 6.

Fig. 2: *Datai* (*Abortion*), 2004

is, he made it both more impersonal, so that it could express other people's reality, and more deeply personal in order to probe his own internal reality as the painter of the image. The osmosis of the personal and impersonal, or the conversion to impersonality, would be his primary concern during the first phase of his career. *Nenryō Hokyū no youna Shokuji* (*Refuel Meal*, 1996) is typical in this respect, and the proliferation of a single figure emphasizes the impersonal and social character of the image's subject matter.

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On the whole, however, the image that increasingly came to dominate Ishida's paintings was the solitary self-portrait as a retreat into the self or a more personal truth. For example, his last painting, which is unfinished, is clearly nothing but a self-portrait, a search for and moving withdrawal into the self. After 2000, the paintings often contain a child who resembles the painter or a feminine presence (e.g., *Datai* [*Abortion*]; fig. 2). *Maigo* (*Lost Child*, 2004) shows a map of a neighborhood drawn on a child's body. Also, in this period, his paintings often present several layers or levels of images that overlap one another. Sometimes the melancholy figure has faces on its trunk that resemble Noh theater masks that have begun to sink. The subject matter seems not so much social or grotesque but personal and peculiarly physical, linked to birth, death, and Eros. The artist's works of these years seem to become more melancholy, more inward-turning, less machinic. They seem to confront a certain psychological crisis. Ishida begins to work with oil paints, rendering the works more *malerisch* (painterly, in the

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sense employed by Heinrich Wölfflin), gradually moving away from the clear, linear outlines of the pre-2000 works. He begins, literally, to "paint" and embarks on another type of exploration, one that is more complex, more coherent, and more subtle. The possibilities hinted at in this late work suggest that, had he lived longer, he might have created art that was even more mature, powerful, and unprecedented. As it was, he had only thirty-two years, but he used every opportunity he was given to pursue his exploration. Was he searching for something with his art, or was he primarily intent on producing an art that was his own but, as he said, "for the other"? Who knows?

Control and Resistance

The years 1990–2005 in Japan, which Ishida experienced as he was intensively developing his art, were more or less somber, colored by the great Kobe earthquake of 1995 and the sarin gas attack by the Aum Shinrikyo cult that terrified the country later the same year. Spectacular murders committed by minors, the decline that followed the economic bubble, and the increasingly visible precarity of the country's youth were social phenomena that defined the atmosphere of the era. Japanese young people were no longer politicized, their desire redirected to the new high-tech consumer and information society. Ishida described his situation in this society in a notebook entry from 1997: "My fear of the society I will be entering: I will get used to it by transforming myself, but I can't. / I feel myself living in the desires of others. I adapt to this by transforming myself, but I find it unbearable, agonizing. / It is virtually impossible to choose a technique or an environment. One can adapt if one transforms oneself. If one refuses to do so, one suffers from anxiety and uneasiness, which one mingles with gags, self-mockery, and grumbling."[5] Often, resistance was expressed by "discommunication," indifference, or a break with the outside world. Ishida and his art are but one witnesses to an era that has not yet ended, this society of control in which submission is voluntary and difference and resistance are thoroughly and rigorously suppressed so that there is little reflection of social conflict in the political arena. The schools constitute a disciplinary machine that delineates a uniform pattern of thinking and behavior.

After the Second World War, Japan adopted a democratic constitution, but of all the world's democratic countries it is the most controlled and disciplined, without apparent vio-

5. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (ca. April–December 1997), in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebooks*, 256.

lence or oppression. That is, Japan is a model of an extremely sophisticated system of subjugation—gentle, efficient, yet perverse—that nevertheless hides enormous frustrations that are ultimately unbearable and uncontrollable. Ishida was an enfant terrible of his time and place, even if he (his person and his art) seems rather subdued, with nothing terrible about him. His caricatures of the society that surrounded him were done with a black humor that goes beyond irony, attaining a perversity and cruelty that can't be ignored. His inspirations and the surrealistic staging of his subjects are exceptional by dint of the sheer precision of his images. The apparent impassiveness of the figure expresses the painter's own extraordinary, intense, and robust sensibility. The minimal events described in these seemingly unassuming works in reality express inescapable, irreversible, unspeakable, but decisive tragedies and catastrophes. Every drawing, every painting is an event.

The figure's postures are notable as well: he may be sitting, squatting, flying, sleeping while sitting up or lying down, standing still, or on all fours. He is always static, however, his movements suppressed, his face impassive, with only minimal variation. But this small amount of variation is important and noteworthy. Every time it occurs, it provokes an event; something irreversible and unbearable takes place.

Ishida admired the films of Abbas Kiarostami and Andrei Tarkovsky, whose static force is incompatible with the cinematic actions and movements that dominate dramatic, spectacular films.

Tiger Hunts, a Bandage, a Torn Pant Leg

If one thinks of the history of art—figurative or abstract; modern, futurist, classical, archaic, or ethnic; impressionist or expressionist; pop, op, or avant-garde; caricature or fantasy—and then of what cannot be classified or situated . . . we know all that exists at the present time. But nothing is finished; painting is endless. Even after the rise of photography, after installation, video, and performance art, painting continued; it will never be exhausted; it is something unclassifiable, something both new and very old that will continue to appear and reappear. Ishida's painting has a strange, unfamiliar, and indefinable power. Had he not died so prematurely, he might have been able to carry his art to glittering heights, although that is not my view. Rather, I think every life is complete together with its end, that the end of life is part of life, forms part of that

life, whether consciously or unconsciously. As Rainer Maria Rilke wrote, for instance in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910), each life contains the seed of its own death. Ishida, moreover, was obsessed with death, often drawing *his* body in a kind of coffin or even his own grave, which makes such pictures "self-portraits of a dead man."[6] He would never have become a great painter admitted to the Japanese Academy. His life would have been that of an absolutely minor painter who only painted figures of minor beings, weak, anxious, lost, stunned by the cruelty of the world. "When I was little, I was delighted by tiger hunts, a bandage, a torn pant leg."[7]

Yet, Ishida sometimes wrote things like the following: "About two years ago, I stopped using meaning and began painting with images."[8] Or, "When there is a message, I have the feeling that something isn't right." Or, "My bad habit: I don't know why, but there is still a subject, as in an advertisement: the meaning, the idea always remain."[9] On the other hand, he also wrote, "I want to make paintings that shed light on something real, in the form of self-portraiture that gives voice to my messages."[10] He was doubtlessly conflicted, torn between a desire to exclude subject and meaning from the image and a desire to convey a message, often in a social context. A solution could be reached only within the images that he realized in his works. People often have a tendency to interpret his works hastily, to read into them the alienation, "discommunication," and isolation of the *otaku* and *hikikomori* lifestyles—a phenomenon of Japanese youth—and the conformism and soullessness inherent in the highly efficiently organized society of Japan. Of the Aum Shinrikyo incident and the country's conformism, Ishida wrote, "I hereby stop being Japanese."[11] In his painting, Ishida simultaneously sought to communicate something and not to communicate anything. His images are realized between these two positions, in the midst of this conflictual situation, but this is also the source of their expressive power.

Of Japanese director Jun Ichikawa's *Byôin de shinu to iu koto* (Dying at a Hospital), Ishida wrote, "There is no subject or message in this film; to understand it, one has only to look at its images, which simply record things. This film would not have been made if it had fastened on a message or a subject. It is faced with something too vast. . . . Far from cinema's fixed ideas, this film has captured reality almost violently."[12] With this idea inspired by a film, Ishida touches on a question that is central to his art, although he was sometimes torn between a message and the "reality" that had to be captured "almost violently." He knew quite well what had to be realized.

6. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (ca. April 1999), in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebooks*, 41.

7. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (commentary on a drawing engraved on a watch, ca. 2000), in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebooks*, 160.

8. Ishida, "Painting Is Me," 124.

9. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (ca. January–November 1995), in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebook*, 264.

10. Tetsuya Ishida cited in Yūzō Ueda, "'Kafka and Tetsuya' or 'Dissolving Self,'" in *Tetsuya Ishida Complete*, 219; originally published in *6th Hitotsubo 3.3-Sq.-Meter Exhibition* (Tokyo: Guardian Garden, 1996), which was the occasion of his first solo exhibition, *Tadayou Hito* (Drifter).

11. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (ca. January–November 1995), in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebook*, 257.

12. Ibid.

"Recently, I have been interested in the meaningless images that I see go by when I close my eyes, which are even more interesting than dreams in deep sleep. They show me something that comes from I know not where. I find them freer."[13] Is this a kind of vision? There certainly is a visionary quality to Ishida's works, without being mystical or prophetic. The painter is a visionary, but so is his recurring figure, with its unfocused, at times blank, gaze. We do not know what the figure is looking at; no doubt, something terrible, unbearable, inescapable. The clarity of vision in Ishida's works is astonishing. There is something clearer in them than the clarity of the painted lines and outlines. In the fireman series (around 2000), the fireman is attempting to save someone in danger or confronting something catastrophic—we cannot see what, though. The impression this creates of a visionary's extraordinary clear-sightedness or clairvoyance reminds me of what Jean Genet said about Arthur Rimbaud, who in his brilliant youth wrote, "O let my keel burst! O let me go into the sea!"[14] Genet believes that Rimbaud, in his poem "The Drunken Boat," foresaw how he would die—that he would get an ulcer far from home and that he would die from complications of having his leg amputated. For Genet, this was not presentiment but an expression of Rimbaud's immense lucidity regarding his own life, including its end. In Ishida's *Tobenaku-natta Hito* (*Person Who Can No Longer Fly*, 1996; Fig. 3), inspired by Rimbaud's poem, the figure comically floats on a little boat.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari speak of childhood and machines. "Let us consider a child at play, or a child crawling about exploring the various rooms of the house he lives in. He looks intently at an electrical outlet, he moves his body about like a machine, he uses one of his legs as though it were an oar, he goes into the kitchen, into the study, he runs toy cars back and forth."[15] They wonder whether all these relations between child and machine really *represent* its relations with its mother or father, as psychoanalysis claims. They refer to Lindner's painting *Boy with Machine*. The boy and the machines together constitute another machine, a "desiring" machine. This machine is not a representation of the parents but is instead directly connected to a gigantic social machine. In an untitled painting by Ishida from around 2001, the figure defecates on automatic teller machines. This might be construed as a literal expression of Sigmund Freud's dictum that money equals shit. But "a desiring-machine and

13. Tetsuya Ishida, notebook entry (ca. June 2002–February 2003), in *Tetsuya Ishida Notebook*, 245.

14. Arthur Rimbaud, "The Drunken Boat," in *Complete Works, Selected Letters*, trans. Wallace Fowlie (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Genet quotes this poem in Jean Genet, "Interview with Antoine Bourseiller," in *The Declared Enemy: Texts and Interviews* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 188–89.

15. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 46–47.

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Fig. 3: *Tobenaku-natta Hito* (*Person Who Can No Longer Fly*), 1996

a partial object do not represent anything. A partial object is not representative."[16] It is here that Deleuze and Guattari refer to Lindner. "The small child lives with his family around the clock; but within the bosom of this family, and from the very first days of his life, he immediately begins having an amazing nonfamilial experience that psychoanalysis has completely failed to take into account. Lindner's painting attracts our attention once again."[17]

Ishida's inspiration, from the beginning, was social. His painting machine was directly connected to social machines. He increasingly sought to inject personification into his images, which always contain a satirical element, a sense of social criticism. In his final works, there is a kind of withdrawal, whose meaning is more elusive, almost imperceptible, an exploration of his own stories. The body is fragmented, persecuted, or fused with a machine; the face is multiplied; the image is split into multiple scenes . . . Is his art advancing toward its/his death? Among these disturbing and melancholy paintings, are some that are strangely calm, that contain no figures but only a printer that reels off a landscape along a road or books piled up beside a window. These beautiful, tranquil, deserted, and marvelously restrained scenes were probably painted in 2003 and 2004, just before the artist's death. Ishida's painting includes few erotic scenes, but two nearly similar paintings—one titled *Ten'i* (*Metastasis*), the other untitled (2004)—depict sleeping or dead faces on the figure's torso. In the untitled work, the figure's sex is sublimated in the female sex and might represent a hermaphrodite. Ishida himself had no need for psychoanalysis to analyze his self and its *machines*; all he needed was the power of his painting and his own ex-

16. Ibid., 47.

17. Ibid.

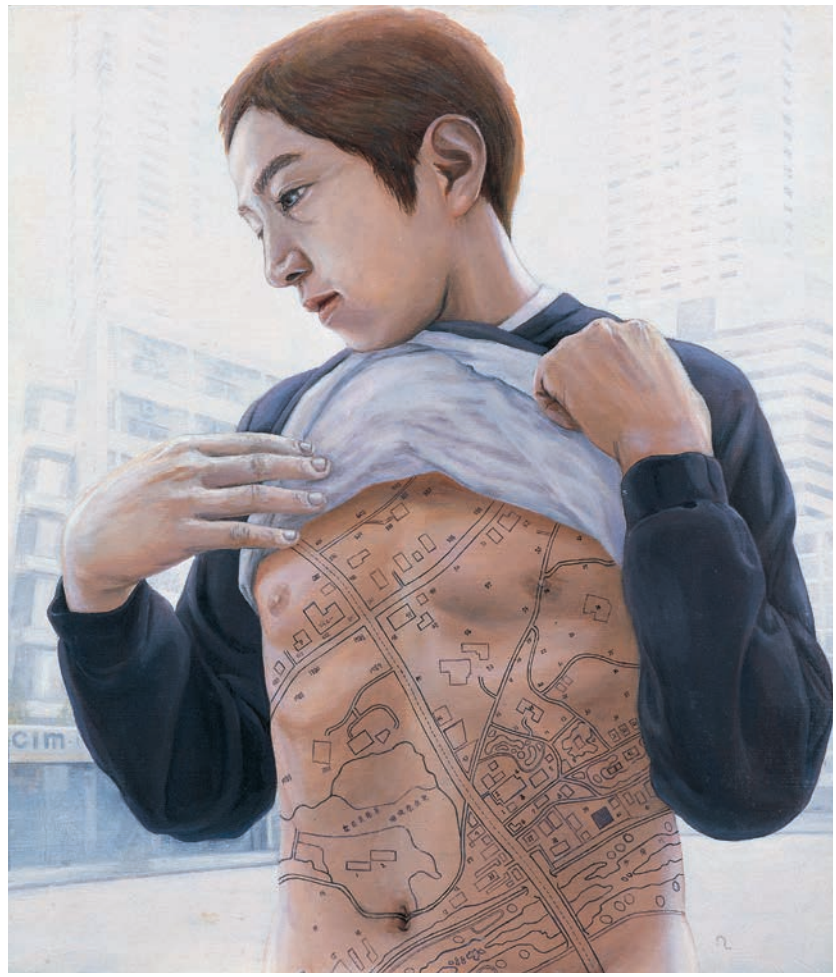
p. 113

traordinary lucidity. His works are full of representations, but they are introduced into a realm that is ultimately no longer social, personal, or psychological. Ishida encounters what is unbearable, elusive, and he grasps the ungraspable and here suggests a singular eroticism that merges completely with his art and its machines. Is there not a kind of fault line running intensely through his art, his desire, and his vision of the world? In this way, caricature, self-portrait, social representation, and a highly personal search for self ultimately converge in his art on a "reality captured almost violently."

Kiro (*Return Journey*), 2003

Tohōnikureru Hito (*Lost*), 2001

Maigo (*Lost Child*), 2004



Futsū (*Interruption*), 2004

Zenmō (*Pubescence*), 2004

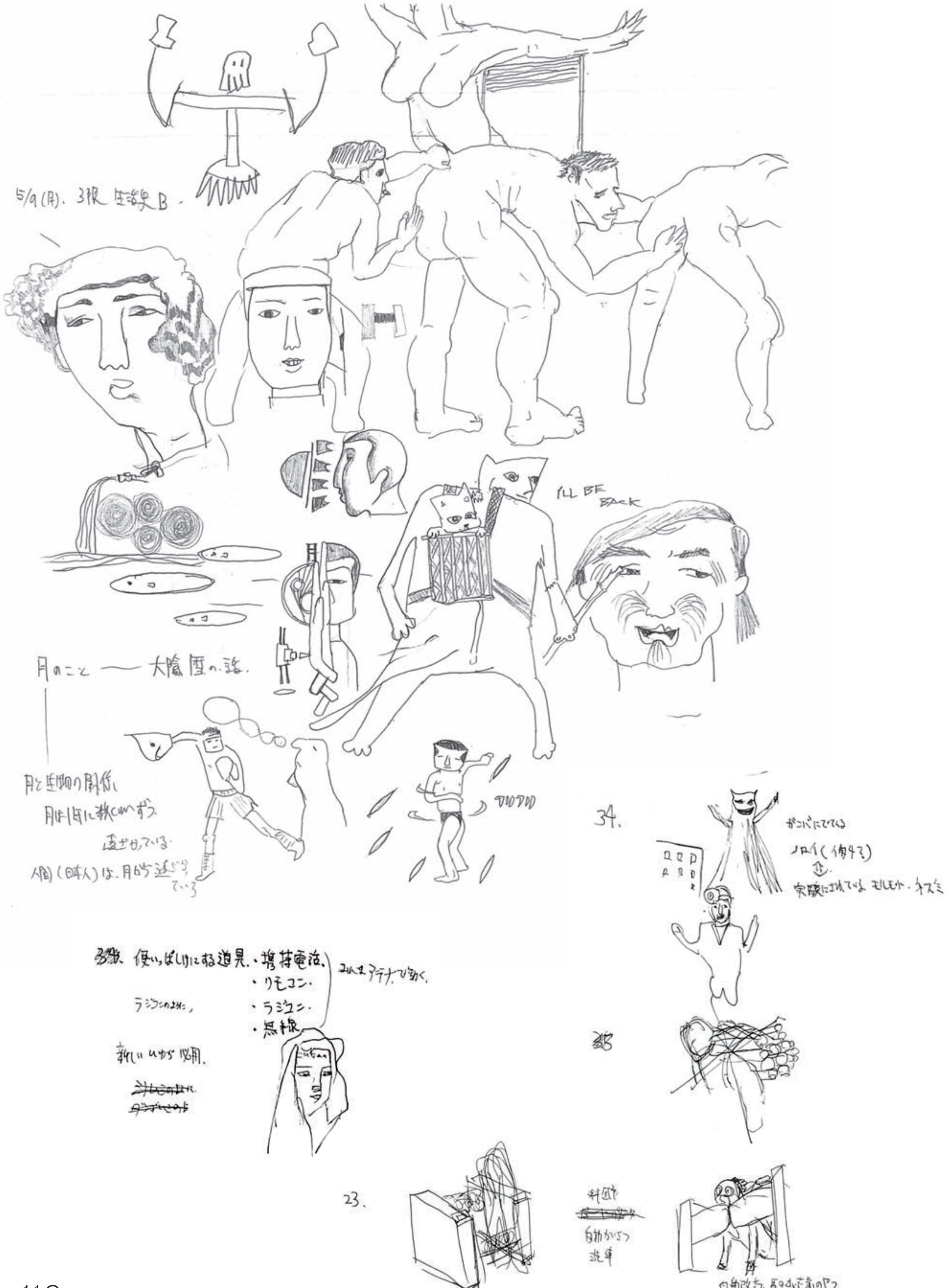
Taieki (*Body Fluids*), 2004

Jiko Kettei (*Decided by Myself*), 1999

Onshitsu (*Hothouse*), 2003

Untitled, 2004

Untitled, 2004



5/9(月)、3限 生活史B
I'LL BE BACK
月のこと —— 大陰暦の話.
月と生物の関係
月は1日に数cmずつ
遠ざかっている.
人間(日本人)は、月から遠ざかっている
34.
ガンバにでてくる
ノロイ(偽45?)
実験にされている モルモット・ネズミ
使いっぱなしにする道具. ・携帯電話、
・リモコン.
・ラジコン.
・無線
みんなアンテナで動く.
ラジコンのように、
新しい修理必用.
23.
自動かうつ
洗車

Notes by Isamu

Isamu Hirabayashi

I was a close friend of Tetsuya Ishida in university. Since I lack the proper distance to critique his art, let me instead try to write as objectively as possible about what I remember of him from the time we first met until just before his death.

Ishida was above all very shy. He always spoke in a hushed voice but was by no means a somber character. He laughed and enjoyed talking with me and his other friends but wasn't one to display his emotions. If you didn't know him, you'd probably have taken him for the reserved, silent type.

I often dropped by his apartment after classes. I'd ring the intercom, and he'd open the door for me. The place was a mess, so littered with paint tubes and paint-daubed palette papers that there was hardly room to walk. Clearing just enough space for me to sit down, he'd pour me a big cup of green tea from a big kettle, and we'd chat quietly while he went on painting the large unfinished canvas he had propped up against the wall.

Being in art school, we of course talked a lot about art. I especially remember one conversation about outsider art. At the time there was an exhibition of outsider art at the Setagaya Art Museum that Ishida had seen. He showed me the catalogue. Outsider art, he suggested, was real art that inspired the likes of Picasso. He even went so far as to call Picasso's works mere imitations.

Ishida was preoccupied with originality, and for him outsider art was truly original. Discovering outsider art, however, seemed to make him self-conscious of not being an outsider. From that day forward, he started to say things like, "There's no creating anything original anymore" or "Ultimately the

Pages 116–125:
drawings from different notebooks by Tetsuya Ishida (1993–2004)

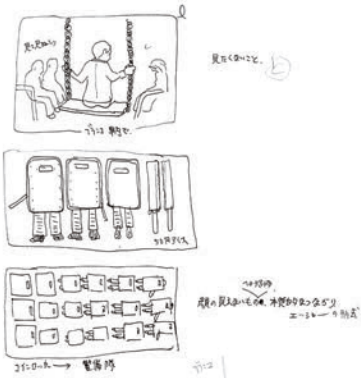
only sense of originality is in mixing this and that together in a quirky mélange." A somewhat resigned view, yet he also seemed to idolize the aura of genius.

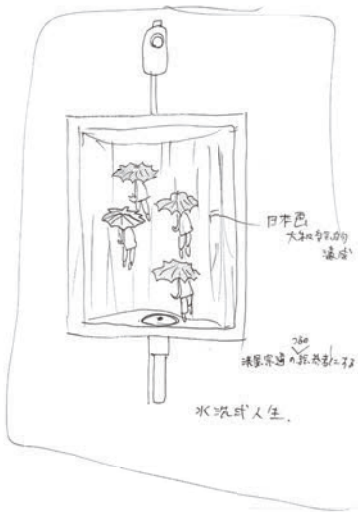
Rokurō Taniuchi was one of Ishida's favorite painters. Ishida had several monographs on him lying around, though for someone so obsessed with questions like "What is art?" or "What is originality?" I remember thinking it odd he should like such old-school Japanese-style illustrations. But I never asked what he found so great in Taniuchi, so I still have no idea why he was keen on him.

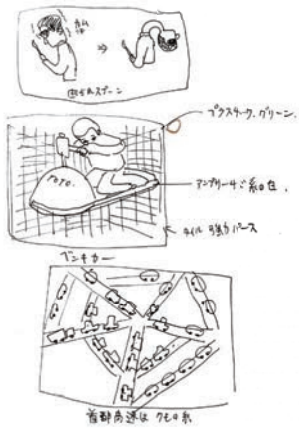
I remember seeing novels by Kōbō Abe, Osamu Dazai, and Ryūnosuke Akutagawa on Ishida's bookshelf, as well as Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot* and Daniel Keyes's *Flowers for Algernon*, though we never talked much about literature. He also had Katsuhiro Ōtomo's manga *Akira*, but we never discussed that either.

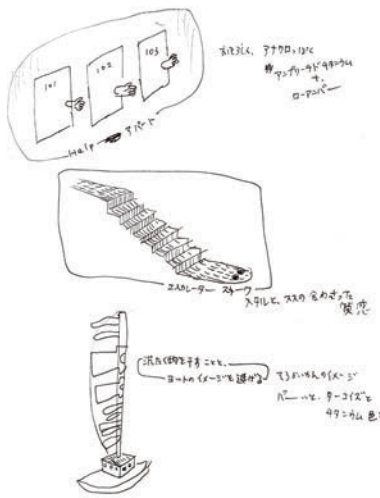
The art scene in the West held a keen fascination for Ishida; it was coupled with a strong defeatist attitude toward his prospects in Japan. He often complained that, in the close confines of the Japanese art world, gallery owners gave preferential treatment to cute young female artists with social graces and that awkward male artists like himself got short shrift. Hence, Japan was no place for him to do art; he wanted to go to Europe or America, where his talent would be appreciated.

Ishida said Yoshitomo Nara got his breakthrough chance in Germany, where he'd gone to art school. Apparently, he sat in the university cafeteria next to a big shot in the European art scene, and things took off from there. True or not, that's




日本画
水洗式人生





what Ishida heard, and that's why he wanted to go abroad as soon as possible.

Ishida detested Takashi Murakami, who came up in the art world around the same time as Ishida. "Where's the art in Murakami's work?" Ishida would ask. "His art is all just a marketing ploy." He really hated Murakami, whereas I, being interested in advertising and design as a career direction, liked Murakami a lot. But I knew Ishida would look down on me if I said I liked Murakami, so I took pains to avoid the subject. Ishida also disliked Yayoi Kusama, saying, "That stuff about some psychological disability behind her offbeat behavior; it's all just an act." In other words, nothing but fake outsider art.

Ishida seemed to dislike artists who skillfully played the art scene and favored those who ended up as artists due to mental illness. He liked van Gogh, for instance. Whether artists or novelists, Ishida's favorites tended to be suicides. Even as a student, it struck me that Ishida must have seen some aesthetic appeal in suicide. One film he recommended to me, *Der Todesking* [The Death King] (directed by Jörg Buttgereit) depicts a week of suicides, one each day. A masterpiece, he told me, but I was too scared to go see it, and in fact I still haven't.

During the last few years before Ishida died, I didn't see as much of him, because my work was so demanding, but even so we met and talked at least once a year. After graduating university, he did late-night, part-time jobs, anything to buy art supplies. His very last years he lived in Sagami Ono [in the suburbs southwest of Tokyo, in the city of Sagamihara], because

of a big art supply store nearby called Sekaido, which he could go to without paying for transportation. Most everything he earned went toward art supplies. He ate only cheap pasta and curry, the same stuff day after day, bought in bulk.

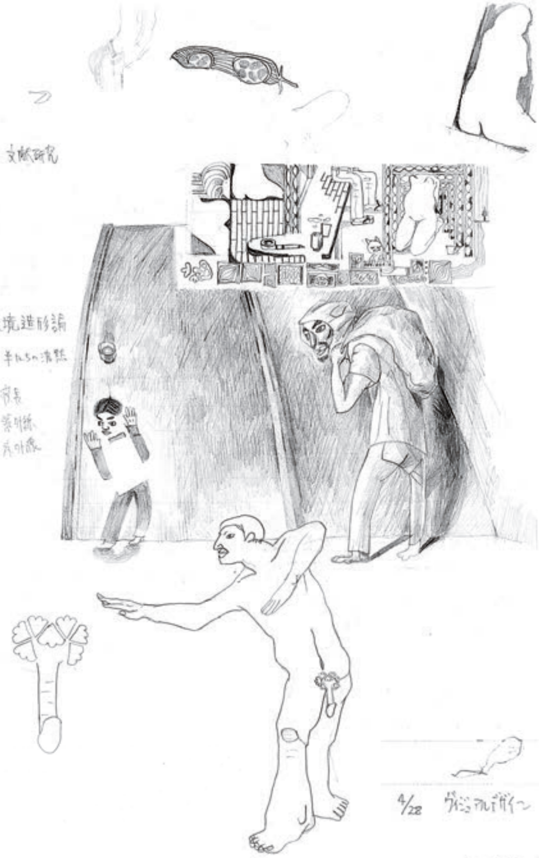
His late-night job at a print shop sounded like hell. He said there was a young guy above him who made his life miserable. His night watchman job sounded bad too. One coworker was accidentally crushed against a wall while directing a truck, and another colleague blamed Ishida. I can only conjecture that Ishida, being such a gentle, delicate soul, must have suffered as if he had killed the man, because from then on he seemed to go a little crazy.

About half a year before he died, the two of us went to eat yakitori. Much of the conversation was about the usual hardships at work and self-ridicule, but, perhaps because he got drunk that evening, he lightened up and said with a smile, "Up to now I've painted pictures with people, but from now on I'm going to paint in bright colors, things like pictures of only waves." Although I now lived far away, I had always worried about Ishida's mental state, so that smile relieved me.

Then a few months or weeks before he died, I got an SMS message on my phone saying an art school student had been stalking him. The art school had given students an assignment to investigate an artist's daily life, Ishida wrote, and this student was constantly photographing him through the window. He'd reported it to the police, but they did nothing. Ishida was full of such stories, so my reaction was not to take it seriously. I simply dismissed it as another of his quirks, but

5/18 水 文献研究

環境造形論
羊たちの沈黙
花と宇宙
恋愛論
共生論



W.モリス ← 影響 ジョン・ラスキン（熱烈な中世主義者）
「正しくものが造られ、そのもに心からの愛着がこめられていた中世の精神」
中世主義者 → 近代デザイン
矛盾
中世風の手仕事によってしか生みだせない
自然への賛美
書物 ― 構築的
よい物 装飾 ― 小芸術、美術と工芸
美と用
貧富の差が極端に広がった
機械文明の大量生産
↑
19世紀文明に対する批判
・4人組 日本の浮世絵、工芸

アシュビー arts and craft → デザイン & インダストリー
‖
グラスゴー派
官能的な装飾の傾向
↑
ウィーン分離派
美術家と工芸家
・アッキントッシュ
幾何的な装飾、曲線なく
近代的に
・ビアズリー

19世紀末 ― 20世紀
アール・ヌーヴォー ポスターの黄金時代 物への深いこだわり
フランスの中世主義 ・象徴的神秘主義 画家が制作にあたる ― 絵画が装飾を目覚ます
もしくは、飾りではなかった
アルフォンス
ミュシャ
ケルト、ゴシック、ロココ
・中世の工芸を追い求めてロマン主義
・美を広げる手段として機械を受け入れ実際的なモダニスト

4/28 ヴィジュアルデザイン 今井

何か調べてくる（来週まで）

4/28 デザイン史

表現論 墓地 カトリック系 ― イギリス式風景庭園
プロテスタント系 ― 田園式
アメリカ ― 都市公園

スライド プッサン、ロラン、風景絵画

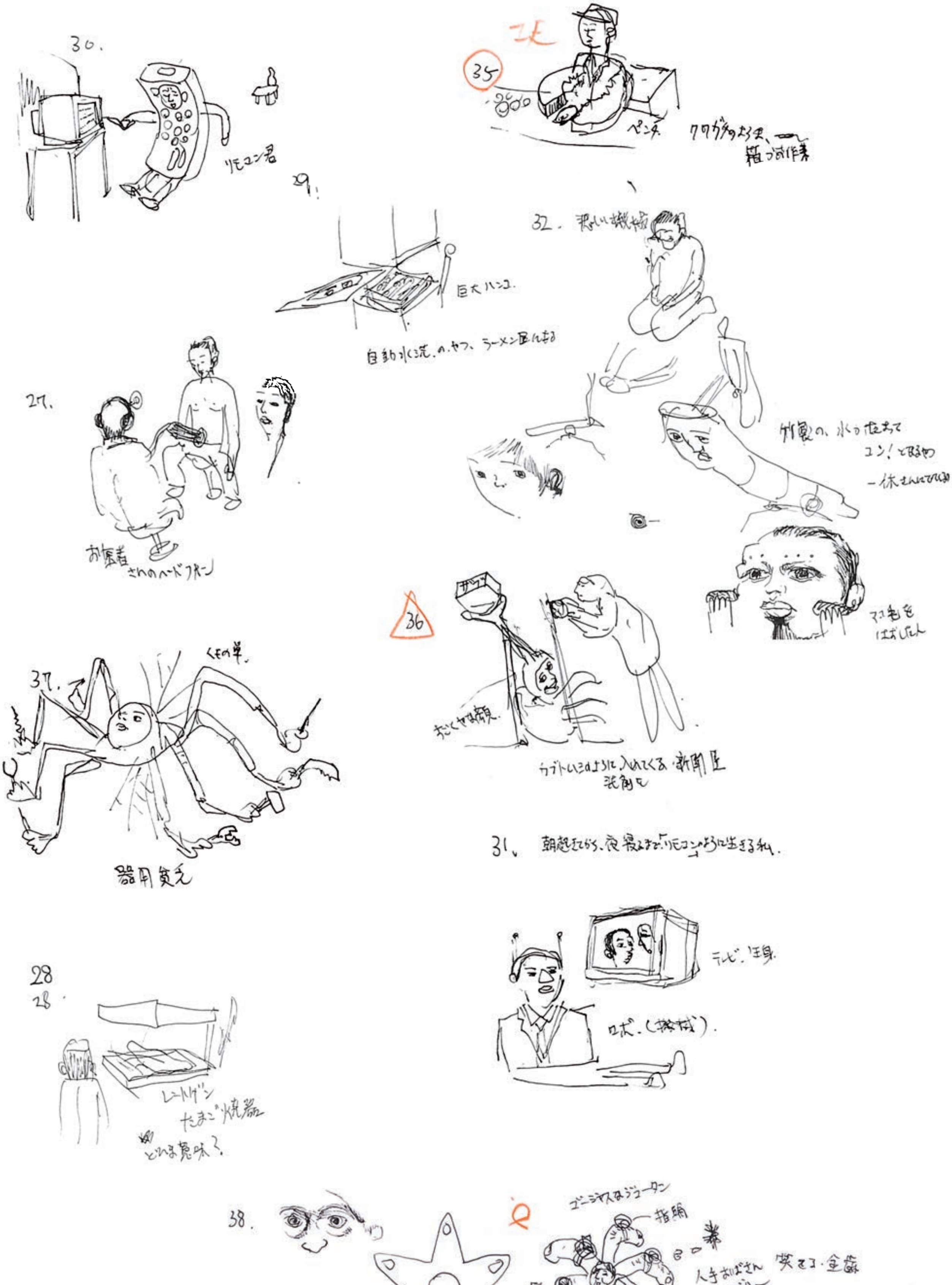
5/7（土）3 音楽 1900〜20年代 ジャズボーカル

4時限 イメージテクノロジー

グリフィスの理論 破れる
内側から、外側へ
◎ 穴を締め
比強度の高

I since regret not going to see him then, because it probably was a real call for help. After Ishida's death, a friend inquired at the art school, but they had never made students complete such an assignment.

When Ishida died, I was still doing advertisements. Each time I met him, he'd tell me, "Forget advertising and come back here." Meaning, return to art. After his death, I got into filmmaking and eventually created something worthy of being called an artwork. I truly regret not being able to show those developments to Ishida. If ever I meet up with him in the next world, I want to tell him in detail about everything that happened after his death. Over drinks, that is.



30.
リモコン君
29.
巨大ハンコ.
35
ペンチ
32.
27.
お医者さんのヘッドフォン
36
37.
くもの巣.
器用貧乏
31、朝起きてから、夜寝るまで、リモコンのように生きる私.
テレビ.
28
レントゲン
たまご焼器

38.
ゴージャスなジュータン
指輪
赤いブニャブニャした手.
キラキラしたサンゴ


24.
33
かぎっ子.
20
大
ビールっぱら?(ブランデー)
エロ.
赤じゅうたん
巨大につくる
25.
火をつけるん→火の大臣.
耳なが族のまつり
22

List of Artworks

Untitled
n.d.
Oil on canvas
31.8 x 41 cm
Private collection
86 (top)

Untitled
n.d.
Oil on canvas
31.8 x 41 cm
Private collection
86 (bottom)

Bia Gāden Hatsu
[*Beer Garden Departure*]
(Also known as *Beer Garden Take-off*)
1995
Acrylic on paper
51 x 78.5 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum
of Art
30

Dango-mushi no Suimin
[*Sleeping Pill Bug*]
(Also known as *The Sleeping Pill Bug*)
1995
Acrylic on board
72.8 x 103 cm
Private collection
35

Mino-mushi no Suimin
[*Sleeping Bagworm*]
(Also known as *The Sleeping Bagworm*)
1995
Acrylic on paper
72.8 x 103 cm
Hiratsuka Museum
of Art
34

SL ni natta Hito
[*Steam Locomotive Man*]
(Also known as *Locomotive Man*)
1995
Acrylic on paper
85.8 x 60.7 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
31

Untitled
1995
Acrylic on board
72.8 x 103 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
32

Untitled
1995
Acrylic on board
103 x 72.8 cm
Y++ Wada Fine Arts
33

Beruto Conbeya jō no Hito
[*Conveyor Belt People*]
(Also known as *Conveyor-belt People*)
1996
Acrylic on board
145.6 x 103 cm
Private collection, Singapore
38

Fu'an na Yume
[*Restless Dream*]
1996
Acrylic on board
145.6 x 103 cm
Y++ Wada Fine Arts
44

Guchi
[*Gripe*]
(Also known as *Complaint*)
1996
Acrylic on board
74.4 x 57 cm
Nick Taylor Collection
45

Heishi
[*Soldier*]
1996
Acrylic on board
145.6 x 103 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
43

Idō no Yume
[*Dream in Motion*]
(Also known as *Mobility Dream*)
1996
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Private collection, Hong Kong
46

Koi no Yume
[*Carp Dream*]
1996
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Hiratsuka Museum
of Art
36

Konbiniensu Sutoa no Boshi-zō
[*Convenience Store Mother and Child*]
1996
Acrylic on board
145.6 x 103 cm
Hiratsuka Museum
of Art
37

Nenryō Hokyū no youna Shokuji
[*Refuel Meal*]
1996
Acrylic on board
145.6 x 206 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
28–29

Shachō no Kasa no Shita
[*Under the Company President's Umbrella*]
(Also known as *Under the President's Umbrella*)
1996
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
49

Sokudo Shinkō
[*Speed Faith*]
(Also known as *Faith in Speed*)
1996
Acrylic on board
145.6 x 103 cm
Y++ Wada Fine Arts
41

Sūpāmāketto
[*Supermarket*]
1996
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Nick Taylor Collection
39

Tobenaku-natta Hito
[*Person Who Can No Longer Fly*]
(Also known as *Can't Fly Anymore*)
1996
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
48

Toire he Nigekomu Hito
[*Toilet Refuge*]
(Also known as *Toilet Refugee*)
1996
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
42

Toyota Jidōsha Ipsum
[*Toyota Ipsum*]
1996
Acrylic on paper
59.4 x 84.1 cm
Private collection
56–57

Tsukawarenaku-natta Biru no Buchō no Isu
[*Derelict Building Department Head's Chair*]
(Also known as *General Manager's Chair in an Abandoned Building* or *Section Chief's Chair Inside an Out-of-Commission Building*)
1996
Acrylic on board
145.6 x 103 cm
Private collection, Hong Kong
47

Guchi 2
[*Gripe 2*]
(Also known as *Complaint 2*)
1996–1999
Acrylic on canvas
42 x 59.5 cm
Private collection
50

Guchi
[*Gripe*]
(Also known as *Complaint*)
1997
Acrylic on canvas
42 x 59.4 cm
Private collection
54

Kenkō Kigu
[*Exercise Equipment*]
1997
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Private collection
40

Ni
[*Cargo*]
1997
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Y++ Wada Fine Arts
55

Untitled
1997
Acrylic on board
182 x 91 cm
The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
51

Untitled
1997
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Y++ Wada Fine Arts
52

Untitled
1997
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
53

Untitled
1997
Acrylic on canvas
59.4 x 42 cm
Private collection
75

Busshoku
[*Browsing*]
(Also known as *Selective Buying*)
1998
Acrylic on board
91 x 116.7 cm
Y++ Wada Fine Arts
80

Kaishū
[*Recalled*]
1998
Acrylic on board
2 boards, 145.6 x 206 cm total
Nick Taylor Collection
76–77

Mebae
[*Awakening*]
1998
Acrylic on board
145.6 x 206 cm
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
79

Sesshoku
[*Contact*]
1998
Acrylic on board
91 x 116.7 cm
Private collection, USA
81

Untitled (1)
1998
Acrylic on canvas
2 canvases, 145.6 x 206 cm total
Wijono Tanoko Collection, Singapore
78

Bunkai
[*Disassembly*]
1999
Acrylic on canvas
51.5 x 72.8 cm
Private collection
82

Fusei
[*Fatherhood*]
1999
Acrylic on canvas
45.5 x 53 cm
Private collection
83

Jiko Kettei
[*Decided by Myself*]
(Also known as *Autonomy*)
1999
Oil on board
40.6 x 57.9 cm
Private collection, USA
111

Kōkyō-butsu
[*Public Property*]
1999
Acrylic on canvas
45.5 x 53 cm
SCAI The Bathhouse
87

Kyori
[*Distance*]
(Also known as *Long Distance*)
1999
Acrylic on board
2 boards, 206 x 145.6 cm total
Nick Taylor Collection
89

Shūjin
[*Prisoner*]
1999
Acrylic on board
103 x 145.6 cm
Private collection, USA
84–85

Sōsaku
[***Search***]
(**Also known as *Manhunt***)
2001
Acrylic on canvas
112.1 x 162.1 cm
The Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company Limited
90–91

Tohōnikureru Hito
[***Lost***]
(**Also known as Untitled**)
2001
Oil on canvas
22 x 27.5 cm
Private collection, USA
106

Untitled
2001
Acrylic on canvas
103 x 145.6 cm
Private collection
88

Kiro
[***Return Journey***]
2003
Acrylic and oil on canvas
45.5 x 38 cm
Private collection
Cover, 105

Onshitsu
[***Hothouse***]
2003
Acrylic and oil on canvas
72.7 x 91 cm
Private collection
112

Untitled
2003
Acrylic and oil on canvas
91 x 116.7 cm
Hiratsuka Museum of Art
92–93

Futsū
[***Interruption***]
(**Also known as *Tie-up***)
2004
Acrylic and oil on canvas
91 x 72.7 cm
SCAI The Bathhouse
108

Maigo
[***Lost Child***]
2004
Acrylic and oil on canvas
53 x 45.5 cm
Y++ Wada Fine Arts
107

Taieki
[***Body Fluids***]
2004
Acrylic and oil on canvas
45.5 x 53 cm
LYC Collection
110

Untitled
2004
Acrylic and oil on canvas
2 canvases, 145.5 x 194 cm total
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
113

Untitled
2004
Acrylic and oil on canvas
91 x 116.7 cm
Private collection
114–115

Zenmō
[***Pubescence***]
(**Also known as *Zenmo***)
2004
Acrylic and oil on canvas
45.5 x 53 cm
Y++ Wada Fine Arts
109

DRAWINGS
AND NOTEBOOKS

Untitled
n.d.
Pen and pencil on paper
20 x 20 cm
Private collection
12

Untitled
n.d.
Pen and pencil on paper
20 x 20 cm
Private collection
58

Untitled
n.d.
Pen and pencil on paper
20 x 20 cm
Private collection
66

Untitled
n.d.
Pen and pencil on paper
20 x 20 cm
Private collection
94

Untitled
August 1993
Notebook (56 pages): pencil, pen, crayon, and watercolor paint on paper
19 x 26.5 cm
Private collection
116, 119, 122, 124, 125 (details)

Untitled
August–October 1993
Notebook (68 pages): pencil, pen, crayon, watercolor paint, collage on sketchbook
33 x 41 cm
Private collection
116, 119, 122, 124, 125 (details)

Untitled
1993–1994
Notebook (136 pages): pencil, pen, and crayon on paper
17.8 x 25 cm
Private collection
116, 119, 122, 124, 125 (details)

Untitled
1994–1995
Charcoal on styrene board
51 x 35 cm
Private collection

Untitled
1994–1995
Charcoal on styrene board
51 x 35 cm
Private collection

Untitled
1994–1995
Charcoal on styrene board
51 x 35 cm
Private collection

Untitled
ca. 1995
Notebook (44 pages): magazine clipping
24.7 x 33.5 cm
Private collection
116, 119, 122, 124, 125 (details)

Untitled
1995–1997
Notebook (32 pages): pen and pencil on sketchbook
18.4 x 25 cm
Private collection
116, 119, 122, 124, 125 (details)

Untitled
1996
Notebook (60 pages): crayon, pen, pencil, and watercolor paint on paper and tracing paper
17.8 x 25 cm
Private collection
116, 119, 122, 124, 125 (details)

Untitled
1999–2000
Notebook (68 pages): pencil and pen on sketchbook
25.6 x 30.8 cm
Private collection
116, 119, 122, 124, 125 (details)

Untitled
October–November 2004
Notebook (60 pages): pencil and pen on paper
17.8 x 25 cm
Private collection
116, 119, 122, 124, 125 (details)

OTHER WORKS INCLUDED IN THE PUBLICATION

Gustave Courbet
Les casseurs de pierres
[The Stonebreakers]
1849
Oil on board
165 × 257 cm
Lost in 1945
14

Tetsuya Ishida
Izakaya hatsu
[Izakaya Departure]
(Also known as *Leaving the Pub*)
1995
Acrylic on paper
51 x 78.5 cm
Private Collection
59

Keitai Denwa Robo to Nōto-gata Pasokon Shōnen
[*Mobile Phone Robot and Notebook PC Boy*]
(Also known as *Mobile-Phone Robot and Laptop-Computer Boy*)
1996
Acrylic on board
103 x 145
CB Collection
70

Tobenaku-natta Hito
[*Person Who Can No Longer Fly*]
(Also known as *Can't Fly Anymore*)
1996
Acrylic on board
103 x 45.6 cm
Private Collection
103

Hōmonsha
[Visitor]
(Also known as *The Visitor*)
1999
Acrylic and oil on canvas
45.5 x 53 cm
Private Collection
64

Kinōsei
[*Functionality*]
(Also known as *Functional*)
1999
Acrylic on canvas
45.5 x 53 cm
Private Collection
25

Shison
[*Offspring*]
(Also known as *Descendant*)
1999
Acrylic on board
2 boards, 206 x 291.2 cm total
CB Collection
60

Moji
[*Letters*]
(Also known as *A Character*)
2003
Acrylic and oil on canvas
74 x 91 cm
Private Collection
22

Datai
[*Abortion*]
(Also known as *Criminal Abortion*)
2004
Acrylic and oil on canvas
45.5 x 53 cm
Private Collection
98

Seiatsu
[*Conquered*]
2004
Acrylic and oil on canvas
53 x 45.5 cm
Private Collection
18

Fernand Léger
Les Loisirs-Hommage à Louis David
[Leisure: Homage to Louis David]
1948–1949
Oil on board
154 x 185 cm
Centre Pompidou - Musée national d'art moderne - Centre de création industrielle, Paris
15

Richard Lindner
Boy with Machine
1954
Oil on canvas
127 x 76.4 cm
Private collection
96

Ben Shahn
Unemployment
1938
Tempera on paper
34.6 x 42.3 cm
Private collection
17

Mitsuteru Yokoyama
Tetsujin 28-gō
(Also known as *Ironman No. 28* or *Gigantor*)
July 1956
Magazine (Cover)
Tetsujin 28-go © Mitsuteru Yokoyama, Kobunsha
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This book is published on the occasion of the exhibition *Tetsuya Ishida: Self-Portrait of Other*, organized by Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in collaboration with Halsted A & A Foundation at Wrightwood 659, Chicago, Illinois.

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
April 11 – September 6, 2019

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CATALOGUE

Catalogue published by the Publications Department of Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Head of Publications
Alicia Pinteño

Editorial Coordinator
Marta Alonso-Buenaposada

Translations
From Spanish to English: Toni Crabb, 4–9, 12–26
From Japanese to English: Alfred Birnbaum, 58–64
From French to English: 95–104
Transliterations from Japanese: Alfred Birnbaum

Copyeditor and Proofreader
Christopher Davey

Graphic Design
Habermas. Consultoría de diseño with Manolo García NZ

Production Management
Julio López

Plates
Museoteca

Printing
Brizzolis, artes gráficas

Binding
Ramos

ISBN: 978-84-8026-594-2
NIPO: 828-19-011-5
L.D.: M-9601-2019

General catalogue of official publications
http://publicacionesoficiales.boe.es
Distribution and retail
http://sede.educacion.gob.es/publiventa/

This book has been printed in:
G-Snow, 150 g
Sirio White/White, 400 g
136 pages. Il. color. 19 x 26.50 cm

Photographic credits
Takemi Art Photos, courtesy of Kyuryudo Art Publishing Co., Ltd., cover, pp. 12, 18, 22, 25, 28–60, 64, 66, 70, 71, 75–94, 96, 98, 103, 105–116, 119, 122, 124, 125
bpk | Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, p. 14
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Acknowledgments

The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía expresses its deep gratitude, first and foremost, to the **Ishida family**, especially **Michiaki Ishida**, for his enthusiastic support and assistance throughout the project. We also acknowledge the generous contribution of the individual and institutional lenders listed below, as well as those who wish to remain anonymous.

Fred Eychaner
Kho Hui Meng
Colección LYC
Nick Taylor
Sunjung Kim
Wijono Tanoko
The Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company Limited
Hiratsuka Museum of Art
National Museum of Modern Art, Tokio
SCAI The Bathhouse
Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art
Y++ Wada Fine Arts

We are also deeply grateful to numerous individuals and organizations who have been engaged in different ways in the exhibition and the catalogue. Our special thanks to Yuko Nishiyama, who has collaborated on behalf of the Estate Tetsuya Ishida in many ways.

Lisa Cavanaugh
Elaine Chan
Catie Danz
Kenjiro Hosaka
Fumiko Ito
Mami Kataoka
Shiigeru Katsuyama
Shoko Kawatani
Marcello Kwan
Otsuko Namakura
Fumio Nanjo
Mitani Rika
Ikkan Sanada
Kyoko Shimizu (Kyuryudo Art Publishing Co., Ltd.)
Masami Shiraishi
Nick Simunovic
Clara Suwon
Atsushi Uematsu
Yumie Wada
Shinichiro Watari
Zara Wee
Alex Whittaker
Jay Xu
Christie's Hong Kong Ltd.
Gagosian Gallery, Hong Kong
Wrightwood 659, Chicago

Finally, to the authors, Isamu Hirabayashi, Noi Sawaragi, Tamaki Saito, and Kuniichi Uno, for their essays.

ISHIDA

SELF-PORTRAIT OF OTHER

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