

Utsuwa — — Utsushi

Symposium — 4 May 2018



Symposium at
Banqueting Hall

Exhibition and Demonstration at
Red Room

Chelsea College of Arts
16 John Islip Street,
London, SW1P 4JU



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Introduction

Shigemi Inaga proposes a "Pirates' View" of world history' in his series of books and articles (see reference below) to redress the Euroamerican centric epistemological framework. This theory has emerged from the first phase of a joint project in Japan, funded by the Japanese government scheme kaken since 2013. The project developed into a Japan-France project in 2015¹ and when a collaboration developed with the Anagama initiative in Oxford² it branched out into a Japan-UK project from 2016. It is expected that this new phase will explore and advance these lines of thought with UAL-CCW-TrAIN, London's research centre for transnational studies.

Drawing from the wordplay of two etymologically associated Japanese terminologies: utsuwa (vessel, container, receptacle, vacuum, reality) and utsushi (copy, transfer, possessed), this project raises philosophical and visual cultural questions on the conventional idea of dichotomy: 'original' vs 'copy', 'fine art' vs 'applied art'/'craft', 'seen' vs 'unseen' and 'material' vs 'immaterial' (Hereafter, the resulting term will be expressed as Utsuwa Utsushi). According to Inaga, the current rigid legal regulations and knowledge production system set by Euroamerica have been challenged by the pirate's trade of products and access to information. However, the negativity attached to the idea of 'copy' also enables us to realise the positive values that can be found in Japanese/East Asian ideas.

It was Okakura Kakuzō in his Book of Tea who pointed to the positive value of the negatively perceived vacuum by saying, 'The usefulness of the water pitcher dwells in the emptiness where water might be put, not in the form of the pitcher of the material of which it was made. Vacuum is all potent because it is also all containing. In the vacuum alone motion becomes possible. The person who could make of himself a vacuum into which others

¹ http://www.nichibun.ac.jp/~aurora/pdf/150120_24paris_berceau_du_temps.pdf

² <http://www.oxfordanagama.org/>

might freely enter would become master of all situations. The whole can always dominate the part'. Unlike the Euroamerican idea, Utsuwa (vessel) is not merely functional tableware. Utsuwa can be a teabowl that contains tea, but can also contain aesthetic spirituality and potent space for containing. Utsuwa can be the human body which contains the mind, or Utsuwa can be a haniwa figurine that may contain the spirit of the dead. Also, Utsuwa is not simply an applied art/craft because it is made of ceramic. Material combined with skills produces a material-centred approach that results in a particular form and aesthetic value that is not confined to the narrow definition of 'applied art/craft' as opposed to 'fine art'. Utsuwa has been copied many times and material knowledge as well as the skills involved in making were passed on to many generations through the process of copying.

In bringing together anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, and practitioners, this project explores an alternative model of understanding visual culture and objects by reinterpreting Utsuwa and Utsushi and examines whether East Asian ideas can bring a new insight into this enquiry. While the theoretical enquiry is guided by Inaga's writings on visual culture, practice enquiry is guided by ceramic artists, inter-media artists, and designers.

Yuko Kikuchi

Key Reference Materials by Shigemi Inaga

1. A Historical Survey of East Asian Trans-national Asian Modernities 絵画の臨界：近代東アジア美術史の桎梏（しつこく）と命運（名古屋大学出版会、2014, in Japanese)
2. 'Pirates Perspective in Trade' 「交易の海賊史観にむけて」, 徐興慶編『近代東アジアのアボリア』（台湾大学出版中心、2013, in Japanese)
3. 'A "Pirates' View" of Art History' Review of Japanese Culture and Society, vol.XXVI, Josai University, December 2014, pp.65-79.
4. In Search of the Haptic Plasticity: Soul touching each other, Forms interwoven 接触造形論：触れあう魂、紡がれる形（名古屋大学出版会、2016, in Japanese).
5. 'Is Art History Global?: A Critical Commentary from a Far Eastern Point of View', in James Elkins, Is Art History Global?, New York; London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 249-279.

Programme

9:00 — 9:10	Welcome and introduction by Yuko Kikuchi (Reader, TrAIN, CCW-UAL)	14:00 — 14:05	Session 2: The Question of 'Craft' in the Spectrum of 'Design' and 'Art'
9:10 — 9:20	Keynote 1 Shigemi Inaga (Professor, International Research Center for Japanese Studies) 'The Pirates' view of the world as an alternative to the current knowledge production and system'		Introduction by Yuko Kikuchi
10:20 — 10:30	<i>Break</i>	14:05 — 15:15	Keynote 2 Julian Stair (Potter) 'Embodying Narratives: Pottery in the 21st century'
10:30 — 10:35	Session 1: The Question of 'authenticity' and border-crossing approach Introduction by Chair: Hammad Nasar (Independent curator and Senior Research Fellow at Paul Mellon Centre and UAL; Former Head of Research & Programmes, Asia Art Archive, HK)	15:15 — 15:20	Introduction by Chair: Dr Imogen Racz (Senior Lecturer in History of Art, Coventry University)
10:35 — 11:05	Toshio Watanabe (Professor, UAL and SISJAC, University of East Anglia) 'The Authenticity of Transnational Japanese Gardens'	15:20 — 15:50	Maiko Tsutsumi (Course Leader, MA Designer Maker, CCW-UAL) 'Thoughts and Utterances in Material Practice: Objects and Words / Thoughts and Actions'
11:05 — 11:35	Alfred Haft (Curator, British Museum) 'The Self-activating Echo: Mitate vs. Yatsushi in Ukiyo-e'	15:50 — 16:20	Marta Ajmar (Deputy Director, V&A Research Institute VARI) 'Mimetic Earthenware: How Italian Renaissance ceramics complicate Eurocentric hierarchies of the arts'
11:35 — 12:05	Hiroshi Onishi (Professor, Kyoto University of Art and Design) 'Digital Art and Question of Copies in Japanese Culture'	16:20 — 16:55	Yuko Kikuchi 'The logic of Kazuya Ishida's Material Centred Approach within Bizen Tradition' Demonstration by Kazuya Ishida (Potter, Bizen and Oxford Anagama)
12:05 — 12:35	Katie Hill (Programme Director, MA Modern and Contemporary Asian Art, Sotheby's Institute of Art) '"Van Gogh was here" (梵高在此). Translating the madness of modernity through Cai Yuan's enactment of an outsider in London in 1873'	16:55 — 17:20	Q&A
12:35 — 13:05	Q&A	17:20 — 17:30	<i>Break</i>
13:05 — 14:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>	17:30 — 18:00	Giorgio Salani (Maker, PhD candidate, Central Saint Martins, UAL) 'Making for Others: qualities and narratives in contemporary British tableware pottery'
		18:00 — 18:30	Chih-I Lai (Curator, National Palace Museum in Taiwan) 'Borrowing or Stealing: the Dialectical Aesthetic Discourse between Designers and Craft Makers in the Yii Project'
		18:30 — 18:50	Q&A
		19:00	<i>End</i>

Keynote 1

Pirates' View of the World Art: Proposal for an alternative to the current system of Knowledge Production

Inaga Shigemi

Piracy has become one of the main concerns of contemporary society. Underneath our present instability, one cannot overlook the fact that the post-World War II regime has come to a stalemate. This requires us to recast our entire conception of world history in the last five centuries. Since the so-called Age of Exploration, the surface of the Earth was segmented in accordance with the hegemonic power of Portugal and Spain, and subsequently taken over by the Dutch and the British. From the Tordesillas Treaty onwards, worldwide piracy was the main driving force heralding Western domination of the world. The commercial triangular transactions between the East, the West, and Africa also heavily depended on piracy and illegal trade. Historical realities are still hidden under official statistical documents. Moreover, the making of international law itself was tied up in the maritime hegemonic conflicts that arose among Western nations, and the notion of the "high seas" was linked to the legal codification of property

and the formation of copyright laws. Now we live in a revolutionary era of information technology and commodity distribution. Hacking in cyberspace and hedge funds in the trade market destabilize the worldwide social system and call for a drastic rethinking of notions of justice and fair-use. Accusation of rights infringement by the established regime and authorities are challenged by the opposing legal claims of those engaged in piracy, which are made within and outside of the parliamentary system. It is obvious that the regulations of current laws are no longer capable of staying up to date with the latest nano-, bio- and digital innovations. This also reveals the incapability of contemporary Western ethics and moral codes to deal with globalization. The established world order is collapsing. A new model to cope with the forbidden dependencies on its surface and the hidden disorder beneath it should be searched for in the realm outside the law, in the "survival art of piracy." Our research team at Nichibunken has been tackling these issues in the last three years.

In the process some basic terminologies have been put into question. In the Paris symposium and exhibition held at the Maison

de la culture du Japon in 2015, the notions of "utsuwa" and "utsuhi" have been examined. "Utsuwa" or the recipient is represented by a cup or a vase, containers the "essence" of which consists of its vacancy, or the lack of substance. "The usefulness of a water pitcher dwelt in the emptiness where water might be put" as Okakura Kakuzo put it in his *The Book of Tea* (1906). "Utsushi" on the other hand means "transmission", "replacement" or "displacement." The semantic field covered by this word destabilizes the distinction between the "original" and the "copy". Obviously, "utsushi" and "utsuwa" share a close etymological root in the Japanese language. And both concepts reciprocally call upon the necessity of rethinking the "transmigration" or the "metempsychosis" in the ecological system.

In this keynote address I would like to shed a new light on the current general collapse of the knowledge system. It aims at proposing a possible new alternative via 'pirates' view' of the World history, in special reference to art market transactions and commerce.

Shigemi Inaga is Deputy Director-General and Professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, and former Dean, Graduate University of Advanced Studies (Sōkendai) in Hayama. He majored in French 19th century art history as well as comparative literature and culture. Since his Ph.D. in Paris (L'Université Paris VII) in 1988, he has developed his field of research into cultural anthropology and intercultural ethics. His books include, *Pirate's View of the World history, A reversed Perception of the Order of Things* (Shibunkaku, 852 pages, 2017), *In Search of Haptic Plastics* (474 pages, 2016), *Images on the Edge* (770 pages, 2014), *The Orient of the Painting* (480 pages, 1999), *Le Crépuscule de la peinture* (467 pages, 1997) (all from The University of Nagoya Press). Among the proceedings he has edited in English are *Crossing cultural Borders: Beyond Reciprocal Anthropology* (1999), *Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts in the 21st Century* (2005), and *Questioning Oriental Aesthetics and Thinking* (2010). He also co-edited volume, *Monokeiro-Monosophia* (2010), at an exhibition held at the Kyoto University Museum. He also curated the exhibition *Receptacle du passage*, and organized an international symposium, *Berceau du temps, Passage des ames* at the Maison de la Culture du Japon (2015).

The Authenticity of Transnational Japanese Gardens

Toshio Watanabe

A key issue for the debate of copy and utsushi is that of authenticity. Very crudely put, it could be argued that in the West 'copy' is regarded as inauthentic, but in the East 'utsushi' is regarded as authentic. Of course, this is a too simplistic characterisation, but quite a useful formula to keep in mind for our debate. This paper will have two parts. In the first part terms, such as 'agency', 'authenticity', 'copy', 'influence', 'transnationality' and even 'Japanese' or 'garden' will be discussed and in the second part, these will be applied to actual examples of transnational Japanese gardens.

The key to the understanding of the term 'transnational' is to recognise the porousness of borders. Whatever the intended content, when the term 'national' is used, it is usually based on clearly drawn borders, whereas the term 'transnational' blurs these borders. The term 'authenticity' also seems to have clear borders. The dictionary definitions vary, but usually include terms such as 'genuine', 'true' or 'faithful'. When we are examining whether a copy or utsushi is authentic, we have to consider

whether they are genuine, true or faithful, but to what?

I should like to subdivide the discussion of authenticity into that of identity and value. The answer to the above question could be to one's identity. If one is true to one's identity, this would be authentic, but if not it would be inauthentic. This answer immediately implies a value judgement. Authentic is good and inauthentic is bad. So, if a copy or utsushi is true to the creator's identity, it would be authentic. So, what are the cases where a copy or utsushi becomes inauthentic? The judgement would be based on whatever yardstick is used, i.e., the basis for the value judgement. What this paper should like to argue is that this yardstick is dependent on the community sharing the value indicated by the yardstick. However, the border of this community could be porous and even more importantly these values are historically contingent, i.e., fluid.

The definition of a Japanese garden could be based on many things: it could be a garden in Japan, designed or sponsored by a Japanese, with Japanese plants or garden paraphernalia, such as a stone lantern, or designed in a Japanese style. As argued above, if a group of people share the view that a particular garden

is Japanese for whatever reason, it is a Japanese garden for that group, even when that view is not shared by people outside that group.

Examinations of the transnationality of Japanese gardens are particularly amenable to this debate and this paper will introduce a number of such cases, where the border territory of the definition of a Japanese garden will be explored. When non-Japanese elements have been used or 'copied in', how would these affect the 'Japaneseness' of that garden and how would this impinge on the nature and the quality of that garden? These are the questions.

Toshio Watanabe studied at the Universities of Sophia (in Tokyo), Tokyo, London and Basel, where he completed his PhD. Professor of History of Art and Design at University of the Arts London and Professor for Japanese Arts and Cultural Heritage, Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures (SISJAC), University of East Anglia (both part-time). Publications include *High Victorian Japonisme* (1991), *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue 1850-1930* (1991), and *Ruskin in Japan 1890-1940: Nature for art, art for life* (1997). Chair of the Association of Art Historians (1998-2001); member of the Tate Britain Council (2002-2005); Director of the Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation (TrAIN), UAL (2004-2015); President of the Japan Art History Forum (2005-2011); Vice President of Comité international d'histoire de l'art (2010-2016); Chair of the Advisory Board, Tate Research Centre: Asia (2016-). Member of the Advisory Board of *Journal of Design History*, *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide* and *Design History Japan*.

The Self-activating Echo: Mitate vs. Yatsushi in Ukiyo-e

Alfred Haft

The differences between *mitate*, *yatsushi*, and other descriptive terms occurring in the titles of woodblock prints seem not to baffle Japanese literary historians. References include Iwata Hideyuki's "Mitate-e' ni kansuru gimon" in *Edo bungaku kenkyū* (1993), and Suzuki Jūzō's commentaries to *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji*, vols. 88-89 in the series *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (1995). Application of the term *mitate* to, for example, Suzuki Harunobu's prints of 1765-66 is a modern phenomenon stemming from the modern history of ukiyo-e studies in Japan. Application of the term "parody" to the same pictures stems from the modern history of ukiyo-e studies in the West. The two approaches have worked at cross-purposes. In literature *mitate* refers to visual impressions based on shape, such as describing the crescent moon as a boat, or falling cherry petals as snowflakes. Figural similarity might be an English counterpart for this type of imagery, often found in *haikai*. Elsewhere *mitate* takes on an aspect of connoisseurship. Kabuki actor critiques apply it to distinctions between performers,

for example to viewing one actor as an ink painting, and another as a painting in bright colors. Use of the term in ukiyo-e prints builds on the *haikai* and kabuki usage. *Yatsushi*, on the other hand, suggests a decline from a position of high to low status, whether through circumstance or choice. The term occurs in Japanese literature throughout the centuries, from the 900s-1700s, but its usage in woodblock prints again seems closest to kabuki, where the *yatsushi* role (an aristocrat or samurai acting as a tradesman) featured regularly. The *yatsushi* character's narrative involves a social transposition recognizable in the temporal transposition of ancient tales to the present-day that occurs in woodblock prints of the Edo period. While the effect is humorous, its final aims may or may not be parodic. This presentation will consider how, despite their technical differences, *yatsushi* and *mitate* functioned in common as tools of self-empowerment in the cultural politics of the Edo period.

Alfred Haft (PhD) is a curator in the Japanese Section, Department of Asia, of the British Museum. His research interests include the visual culture of the Edo period (1615-1868) and the role of popular culture in social discourse. Publications include "Hokusai and Tokugawa Society", in *Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave*, ed. Timothy Clark

(2017); "Affirming the Life Erotic: Yoshida Hanbei's *Kōshoku kinmō zui* (1686), in *Japan Review* 26, special issue, *Shunga: Sex and Humor in Japanese Art and Literature* (2013) and *Aesthetic Strategies of the Floating World: Mitate, Yatsushi and Fūryū in Early Modern Japanese Popular Culture* (2012).

Digital Art and the Question of Copies in Japanese Culture

Hiroshi Ōnishi

My paper discusses the 'Utsuwa (vessel) and Utsushi (copy/transfer): Life of Transient Forms' exhibition held in Kyoto in 2005. I curated this exhibition and also exhibited my work as an artist. The theme of this exhibition is continued in this symposium in London, and my presentation will focus on the issue of 'copies' in digital art and Japanese culture through the introduction of four artists who participated in this exhibition.

Takahiro Kondō was born into a traditional potter's family in Kyoto. Starting as a potter of tableware, he has developed his career as a ceramic artist. His ceramic work 'Reduction' is a seated figure modelling himself with a hollow inside and the face removed (Fig. 1 — p.16-17). It is a human shaped sculpture borrowing the form of a tableware piece or a vessel. The human figure is an expression of a vessel carrying one's soul, beyond a mere physical body with its included organs. The work suggests the idea of reincarnation where the soul will be transferred to another body after

the present body has ceased living. Kondō states this work is 'utsusemi (a currently living body) reflecting the time I'm living in now' and overlaps himself (a subject) and the time he's living in (an object). This idea derives from the Buddhist Avatamska Sutra, which says a part reflects the whole while the whole reflects the part by reflecting each other. Kondō explains his work by using the terms such as 'Utsuwa (vessel)', 'Utsushi (copy)', and 'Utsusemi (transient living being)' – which all share the sound 'utsu' and their etymological connections. It creates more depth in meaning in Japanese, although the general meaning is understandable in translation in European languages.

Mitsuhiro Okamoto's work 'Batta Mon' is an *objet d'art* which plays on the words 'batta' meaning a locust, and 'batta mon', (knockoff). It is made of fabrics that have the same logos of well-known fashion brand companies, such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Gucci and Fendi (Fig. 2 — p.16-17). When Okamoto exhibited this work for the first time in 2010, one of the fashion brand companies complained that the fabric is similar to those used in counterfeit products, thus breaching their copyright. As a result, the work was removed from the exhibition.

Okamoto didn't publicly announce that the fabric he used was original or a pirate copy. What is interesting about this incident is that copyright laws invented in the modern West have caused conflicts with 'art' that has also been cultivated in the West. In contrast, *honkadori*¹, *renga*² and *utsushi*³ in traditional Japanese arts embrace open source and shared creation as an art theory and artistic method. Furthermore, these ideas carried over to Japan's contemporary art subculture, in particular, in the field of *Niji Sōsaku*⁴ (a secondary creation, otherwise known as fan art). These ideas existing in Japanese culture inform different kinds of wisdom for artistic creation that is an alternative to the ideas in western countries.

Makoto Ōfuno is an artist using

mineral pigments to create Japanese-style painting. 'Reflection field #3' is an installation work which is a rock with a painted cut surface sitting atop mineral pigments and marble powder scattered around it (Fig. 3 — p.16-17). The rock was extracted from sedimentary rocks which formed about 100,000 years ago when the Aso Mountain in Kyushu island formed a caldera crater. The surface of the rock is painted with the pigments which are a mixture of powders of crystals, calcite, marbles and glue. Ōfuno has a special interest in the minerals used for pigments. For example, he believes that there is a special power contained in each mineral given by the place where the minerals are formed and the unique process how they are formed, even though they all look similarly as blue pigments.

¹ *Honkadori* is a method of making a new poem by borrowing part of a well-known poem. It intends to make a connection with the original poem and thereby enrich itself by adding creative interpretation. The idea is an open source process.

² *Renga* is a style of a poem made in collaboration with the first part by one person and the second part by another person. This creative process can be enjoyed by two to more than ten people. It is an open-ended format for both the author and creation.

³ *Utsushi* is a method of creation in traditional Japanese crafts, such as pottery and Japanese swords. It means making copies that imitate the forms and patterns of masterpieces created in the past or the work itself made in such a method. This copying method is practiced by craftsmen not only to improve the skills as part of training, but also to express their respect for the predecessors' work and embody their spirits (and even soul). These become criteria of evaluation on technical, mental, and spiritual levels

⁴ *Niji Sōsaku* means a method of making an original work while borrowing famous characters from manga and anime, or a work made in such a manner. These types of work use platforms such as shared internet sites and hobbyist manga magazines sold in *Comike* (a large comic market and fair for geeks where independent manga artists gather and sell their work). In this geek subculture, there is no negativity attached, rather most original creators are happy about their creation borrowed for secondary creation.

This idea is common to the belief in Shintoism, which sees monumental rocks and odd shaped rock as yorishiro a representative of a divine spirit. Thus, Ōfune's work is a vessel that can summon and contain the divine spirit.

Lastly, I will introduce my own work. 'Shrine Fish Lumière' is a video work which uses the images I have selected from those important in the history of films (Fig. 4 — p.16-17). I set the criteria for the selection of images that are copies which are more powerful than the original. For this work, I used the Lumière brothers' first film, *Workers leaving the Lumière factory in Lyon*. Since 1895, when this was made, till up to now, numerous copies have been made, and shown in different media including film, video, optical media and internet, even after the original film was lost. This situation made me feel that there is a ghost of this film around wandering through different media. Therefore, I placed this ghost image in the Japanese portable shrine to worship. From a perspective of material objects, the original negative film created by the Lumière brothers is hierarchically more valuable than the numerous copies now available. However, from an image-centred point of view, you

can also say images are liberated from the objects on which they were dependent. Currently, images are made in digital technology, and digital images are not dependent on objects like negative films and do not deteriorate, even when copied multiple times. From the outset, there is no hierarchy between the original and the copy. I found this issue of independence of image very interesting, in connection with the Japanese culture embracing the idea of incarnation, which explains how spirits departing from one physical body move to the other body, and Shintoism, which believes a massive rock is not God himself but yorishiro, where a divine spirit visits.

Consequently, the theme of this symposium, Utsuwa Utsushi is an important issue for media artists. In their creative process of filming, editing, showing, and transferring, each stage involves *utsushi* (this word contains multiple meanings of all these 撮し — filming · 写し — copying · 映し — projecting · 移し — transferring) and in each stage, a video image requires a medium that is *utsuwa* (a receptacle). After all, video images don't have any real substance, therefore this Utsuwa Utsushi enquiry will fit perfectly in the example of a video image. The single

form of 'media' is 'medium' that also means an agency like a shaman that mediates communication between spirits of the dead and living human beings in the psychic world. In association with this meaning, 'Media Art' is an appropriate naming for the art born after the age of mechanical reproduction.

(translated by Yuko Kikuchi)

Hiroshi Ōnishi is an inter-media Artist and a Professor at the Department of Design, Kyoto University of Art and Design where he has been teaching video and animation production since 2002. Formerly, he was a director of a video production and Computer Graphics studio. He also works as a board member of ASIFA-JAPAN (Association Internationale du Film d'Animation – Japanese branch) and is secretary of MONO-sophy (monogaku) of the Sense-Value study group. His works include image installations in traditional Japanese houses (e.g. Kyoto Machiya), and animations using travel photos. He has been a project leader for this 'Utsushi Utsuwa' project, organising workshops and curating exhibitions in Japan and France.



Fig. 1
 近藤高弘 / KONDO Takahiro
 'Reduction', 2014
 陶器立体坐像 / seated statue
 東北七ヶ宿の原土、自然灰、登り窯焼成 / Local clay of Tohoku district, Hichigasyuku, Natural Ash, Climbing kiln



Fig. 3
 大船真言 / OFUNE Makoto
 'Reflection field #3'
 2015
 岩絵具、凝灰岩(産地: 高千穂) / Powdered mineral pigment on welded tuff (areas: Takachiho)
 大理石粉 / marble sand



Fig. 2
 岡本光博 / OKAMOTO Mitsuhiro
 'Batta Mori' (バツタもん)
 2008



Fig. 4
 大西宏志 / ONISHI Hiroshi
 'Shrine Fish Lumière'
 2014
 ミクストメディア (厨子、メディアプレイヤー、映画『工場の出口』) / Mix Media (Portable Shrine, Media player, Film "La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Michael Lyons")

**'Van Gogh was here' (梵高在此).
Translating the madness of modernity
through Cai Yuan's enactment of an
outsider in London in 1873**

Katie Hill

This paper explores a recent work by Chinese artist Cai Yuan, *The Van Gogh House Project*, 2015. As one of the first Chinese artists to arrive in the UK in the early 1980s, Cai's practice has explored the politics of institutional exclusion and violence for more than twenty years. He rose to notoriety with his performative action: *Two Artists Jump into Tracey's Bed* (1999), as one of the performance duo *Mad For Real* (Cai Yuan and JJ Xi). In this interventional work, the artists physically invaded the exhibited Turner Prize nominee Tracy Emin's work *My Bed* in Tate Britain, storming onto the front page of every newspaper in the UK.

The Van Gogh House project (2015) was an immersive, durational performance entailing the artist inhabiting temporarily the dilapidated house in south London once lodged in by the young Vincent Van Gogh in 1873. Using the house as a kind of performative stage and as an abject living space with no modern utilities, Cai captures a tension between lived

reality (of impoverished marginalised citizens such as migrants) through his durational performance in which he experiences unexpected aspects of the immediate environment, most notably the crazed handwritten notes of an immigrant neighbour called Mike, who sends daily notes through the door to a woman called Sophie, who apparently once lived in the house. The temporal conflation of Van Gogh's anguished mental state, in his infatuation with the landlady's daughter and Mike's contemporary obsession with Sophie accidentally invades the 'residency' in a reminder of the consistency of the human condition.

Cai's 'tracing of Van Gogh's soul', is also guided by his own journey as a painter who studied under Chen Danqing in Nanjing in the late 1970s and his immersion into the icons of the Western modernist tradition via artists who have become predominant figures in art history and artistic pedagogy. From a Chinese perspective, nineteenth century and modernist French painting was axiomatic to the development of oil painting in the 1970s and 1980s and ironically could be said to dominate the imaginary of Chinese art throughout the twentieth century. A further layer is added when the more recent proliferation of Van Gogh image production in China is considered and

the purchase of the house by auction of Chinese entrepreneur and artistic patron Wang Jian, who facilitated the project and aims to develop the house as an artistic centre and heritage site.

In the paper, these various strands of the work are explored, together weaving a complex narrative within which arise questions of artistic validation/value and the formation of art historical canons across China and the West and the dynamics of artistic migration; the 'residency' itself and ultimately the state of modernity itself as a kind of perpetual madness.

Katie Hill is Programme Director of the MA in Modern and Contemporary Asian Art at Sotheby's Institute of Art, London. Her research field is contemporary art from China and has included work on the positioning and dynamics of artists from the Chinese diaspora in Europe, abstraction in 21st century China and mapping cultural value in contemporary China. Her most recent chapter is published in a forthcoming book: Yeh and Thorpe (eds.), *Contesting British-Chinese Culture*, Palgrave MacMillan (2018). She is also director of the Office of Contemporary Chinese Art in Oxfordshire and trustee of the Centre for Contemporary Chinese Art, Manchester. Her recent research also includes the life of her ancestor John McLeavy Brown who worked under Robert Hart in China and Korea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Keynote 2

Embodying narratives: Pottery in the 21st century

Julian Stair

In this paper, I will review the history of studio pottery in relation to a hierarchical art world reluctant to expand the 18th century paradigm of the *academy*. Shaped in part by Roger Fry's theories, studio pottery was at the forefront of Modernism in England and exemplified abstract form until Leach's revisionist ideas of craft and Mingei theory effected a return to 19th century values. International (?) Modernism's machine aesthetic and bias against the domestic and the subsequent gendering of craft as feminine further isolated studio pottery as an outmoded artistic practice. The progressive dismantling of the canonical structure of art through Duchamp's questioning of the autonomy of the art object, the rejection of aesthetics on grounds of cultural relativism and the rise of conceptualism additionally weakened pottery's relationship to critical theory. Roland Barthes' 'Death of the author' & 'birth of the reader' and recent critical developments such as Nicolas Bourriaud's theory of Relational Aesthetics, which rejects art praxis and the material limits of art in favour of

socio-political audience interaction, seem to distance pottery even more. But, if one examines the emphasis behind such developments and the shift from the independence of object to the *interdependence* of its recipients, pottery's long-standing ethos of social engagement through use becomes highly apposite.

Pottery's multivalence has been too layered for mainstream visual art epistemology to appreciate. Neurological research has recently expanded our understanding of embodied cognition suggesting that there are over thirty bodily senses rather than five, with sensory perception now being regarded as central to shaping consciousness and our sense of self. The optical and haptical nature of pottery, fostering of tacit knowledge and agency make it a rich subject for creative practice. Furthermore, pottery operates in multiple environments and enables social interaction through its subversive mobility that doesn't rely on the framing of the white-cube.

While contemporary fine art oscillates between the autonomy of the object that comments upon the world, or art that engages audiences such as Carsten Holler's fairground slides, pottery already does both in a

seamless manner. Pottery can, but doesn't need to, employ narrative devices to reflect life; it actively shapes life through rituals that range from the mundane to the profound: 'breaking bread' with family and friends to mediating death through funerary objects. Narrative art or literature relies on detached contemplation to tell stories and help us understand our place in the world. Pottery and other useful arts embody narrative by actively shaping life and reminding us what it means to be human.

Despite its problematic history with 20th century fine art criticism, I will argue that pottery can function as a significant artistic genre within the theoretical framework and praxis of contemporary art while offering the opportunity for a philosophical re-evaluation of how institutions validate and markets consume art. Although sometimes regarded as the Cinderella of the art world, pottery's multivalence, materiality and agency should not be overlooked, for it has never been more relevant to the creative and philosophical demands of 21st century culture.

Julian Stair (PhD, RCA) is one of the UK's leading potters, exhibiting internationally since 1982 and has work in 30 public collections including the V&A, British Museum, American Museum of Art & Design, Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Kolumba Museum. Recent solo exhibitions include *Quietus: The Vessel, Death and the Human Body*, (mima, NMW Cardiff, Winchester Cathedral, Somerset House, London 2012-14) and *Quotidian* (Corvi-Mora Gallery, London 2014-15). Recent group exhibitions include the Yale Center for British Art, USA, Rosemarie Jäger Gallery, Frankfurt; art fairs include Frieze, London and TEFAF, Maastricht. Julian is a leading historian of English studio ceramics with essays published by the Courtauld Gallery, Tate, Yale Center for British Art, Leeds Art Gallery/Kettles Yard/Dulwich Picture Gallery. Publications include *The Body Politic: The Role of the Body in Contemporary Craft*, Crafts Council, 2000 and Co-editor of *Contemporary Clay and Museum Culture*, Routledge, 2016. Julian is a Research Fellow at the V&A Research Institute. Awards include the European Achievement Award, W.C.C. and the Bavarian State Prize. Julian has been interviewed by the British Library for the National Life Stories Collection and is an advisor for the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest panel for the UK government.

Thoughts and Utterances in Material Practice: Objects and Words / Thoughts and Actions

Maiko Tsutsumi

This paper reports on an on-going research project that explores the role textual language plays within material-based practice, where skills and knowledge manifest largely through materials and actions. The research employs the perspective of a practitioner, who has trained in traditional craft practice where practical actions and material knowledge play predominant roles in the acquisition of skills and development of the work. The subject is explored through a curatorial project, as well as theoretical research, and references works in broader subject areas such as cognitive psychology.

The research stems from studies on materiality and its relationship to practical knowledge, which began with the curation of *Thingness* exhibition (2011 and a sequel in 2013), and other related events. Since then, the research has extended into the forms and nature of knowledge in material based-practice: embedded, tacit and experiential.

The role of language in the development of material practice has caught my attention throughout my teaching career; for the past decade, I have supported designers and makers in the development of their professional practice. Many practitioners, who are primarily engaged in practical and material 'language', have an uneasy relationship with, or an aversion to, textual language, seeing it as antithetical to their practical work. On the contrary, language can be a useful tool for reflection and self-direction. However, the challenge is how to incorporate it into material practice where an advanced understanding of materials and processes enables creative thinking.

This challenge has brought me to the question of tools for conceptualization, for which language has often been regarded as the primary mode. However, as it is evidenced in studies in cognitive psychology, language is not the only tool for conceptualisation. I have long been interested in other possible modes of meaning production and transmission, other than through representation or codes.

This interest is informed by my experiences of working in the craft/ design industry, as well as education, in

both Japan and the UK. I understand that the culture of craft practice in Japan that I experienced reflects a form of tradition where knowledge, ideas, and information are often expressed and explored in non-verbal forms, most notably in the form of the arts (in actions, manners, and material things). However, in the Western tradition the nature of such knowledge has been underexplored, because of its lack of articulation and of vocabulary.

I propose that, by understanding the nature of the relationship between language, action, thought, and interaction with materials, we can better understand the nature of knowledge that is at work within material practice beyond cultural boundaries. In this context, textual language, material and actions are equally important as tools to facilitate the organisation of thoughts and conceptualisation.

Maiko Tsutsumi is course leader for MA Designer Maker, and Postgraduate Programme Director at Camberwell College of Arts, University of the Arts London. Maiko studied Japanese lacquer work and woodwork, and apprenticed to furniture makers in Kyoto before moving to London where she received her master's degree in furniture design at the Royal College of Art in 1998. She completed a practice based PhD, *The Poetics of Everyday Objects* at Kingston University in 2007, while working at Tomoko Azumi's t.n.a. design studio. Maiko has curated exhibitions including: *Thingness* (2011); *Thingness: the Collection* (2013); *The Laundry Room* (2012), and *The Department of Repair* (2015), for which she edited accompanying publications. Her key research interests are materiality, tacit and embedded knowledge in making/ design practices. She is currently working on another curatorial project *On the Way to Language* that explores roles of language within material-based practice.

Mimetic Earthenware: How Italian Renaissance ceramics complicate Eurocentric hierarchies of the arts

Marta Ajmar

Using Italian Renaissance ceramics as a springboard, the paper interrogates critically the art theoretical hierarchy that assumes a dichotomy between intellectual and corporeal engagement in the making of artefacts and a separation between 'original' and 'copy' and between 'major' and 'minor' art. It proposes instead to take inspiration from contemporary debates and practices originating within the realm of *téchne* or technical know-how, where the novel artefact emerges from the interaction between inquisitive material knowledge and praxis. Italian Renaissance pottery occupies an ambiguous epistemological space within contemporary conceptualisations of the arts and accordingly the lexicon employed to refer to it embraces a wide semantic field, from *arte figulina* to *arte del vasaio*. *Arte figulina* is a phrase found commonly to refer to the potter's art and derived from the Latin *ingere*, meaning to give form, to model, connecting pottery firmly with the liberal art of sculpture. In the Renaissance, this notion of the potter as someone able to inform and

manipulate matter leads to a merging together of potter and modelling sculptor, or sculptor in clay, thus eliding the distance between ceramics and sculpture. The phrase *arte del vasaio* or 'potter's art' refers to the ware produced or *vasi*. Even this more mundane expression alludes through the Latin term 'vas' to the ability to contain, enclose, wrap, shroud or cover something else, presenting the *vasaio* as a maker of things able to contain other things, in processes of control over matter that resonate with the concepts encapsulated by *Ut suwa*. By exploring linguistically the Renaissance understanding of ceramics as a technology hinging on the power over material transformation, I will show how the boundaries between supposedly separate artistic practices are blurred.

Pottery also helps complicate simplistic oppositions between 'design' and 'execution' because of the continuous conversation occurring between mind, body, tool and material demanded it, challenging a subject-object approach to making. Focusing on mimetic earthenware, I will foreground a new critical framework of material mimesis, a phrase forged to capture the way in which many Italian Renaissance artisanal practices operated through continuous processes of mutual

trans-material emulation, whereby an art strove to *look* and *be* like another, in a flow of constant transformation, thereby complicating comfortable separations between the arts. This approach encourages a breaking away from hardened Eurocentric notions of art and opens instead a pathway into global processes of material, technological and epistemological interconnectedness. The imitative framework allows for a more complex discourse to emerge, one that takes into account processes of cumulative invention and where experimentation and innovation rely on successful 'copying'. By introducing alternative concepts, such as *utilitas* or usefulness, we will also help expand the theoretical scaffold within which the arts are understood and question a narrow, singular idea of art.

Marta Ajmar is Deputy Director of the V&A Research Institute (VARI), a transformative programme of collections-inspired research, academic partnerships, and teaching and public engagement activities jointly supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Working at the interface between the museum, academia and the world of practice, within VARI she co-leads the research project *Encounters on the Shop Floor: Embodiment and the Knowledge of the Maker* (<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/encounters-on-the-shop-floor>), bringing together practitioners

in the arts, performance, humanities, sciences and social sciences to explore new ways of recognising and championing embodied knowledge through collaborative research and pedagogical modelling. Before joining VARI she was Head of V&A/RCA History of Design (<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/history-of-design-postgraduate-programme>), a world leader in the study of design and its global histories. Her curatorial experience includes directing the award-winning research project for the V&A exhibition *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, funded by the Getty Foundation and the AHRC. This project led to two book-length publications exploring the culture of the domestic interior through an interdisciplinary lens: *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2006) and *Approaching the Italian Renaissance Interior: Sources, Methodologies, Debates* (Oxford, 2007). She is currently working on a monograph, (supported by a Leverhulme Research Fellowship for 2016-17), which looks at cross-cultural artefacts and the circulation of artisanal skill and technological knowledge between Europe and Asia. She holds an MA and PhD from the Warburg Institute (University of London) and degrees from the Beijing Language and Culture University (北京语言文化大学), the ISMEO (University of Milan) and the University of Pavia. She has been the recipient of awards from the Wellcome Trust, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the British Academy. In 2016-17 she was Visiting Scholar in the Faculty of History at the University of Cambridge and she is currently Visiting Professor in the Art History Department at the University of Bern.



Kazuya Ishida's Logic of Material centred Approach within the Bizen Tradition

Yuko Kikuchi

This paper introduces Kazuya Ishida and offers my critical commentary on the issues that this raises before his demonstration. Firstly, I will outline the history and tradition of Bizen pottery in order to contextualise Ishida's location in Bizen 'tradition'. Bizen is one of the six 'ancient kilns' with a history of over 1,500 years and is famous for its traditional unglazed high temperature-fired pottery which has come to be known as *Bizen*-style. Bizen has articulated a distinctive 'tradition' during the Momoyama period (1573-1603) in association with the tea aesthetic under the patronage of war lords and tea masters, and its modern revival in the 20th century parallels the emergence of studio potters. *Bizen* also saw revival and rebranding through Japan's unique national cultural policy, the Living National Treasure system established in 1955, for sustaining 'tradition'. Key figures such as Tōyō Kaneshige (1896-1967) who was awarded the first Living National Treasure in Bizen in 1956, created tea bowls and tea utensils with his modern interpretation of Momoyama Bizen tea-ware. Kaneshige's skills in using

a particular clay material and kiln firing method have formed a lasting influence that has continued to the present. Ishida's teacher, Jun Isezaki, who was also awarded the Living National Treasure status in 2004 carries forward this principle of Bizen tradition that is based on a particularity of handling material and kiln firing. I will discuss how we might understand Bizen 'tradition', how material and firing can be defined and articulated in the modern period, and how these inform Ishida's work which he explains as *shibari*, which he explains as limitations, in the sense of being tied up by rope.

Secondly, I will discuss how this 'tradition' is integral to material and a material-centred approach in linking with my conversation with Ishida who stresses the importance of expression of intrinsic characteristic of clay and transformation of natural ashes in kiln. Similar ideas about being true to materials have been expressed by many potters throughout the world, since the emergence of studio potters such as Bernard Leach and Kenkichi Tomimoto who have acquired a modern consciousness of being artists. In postwar Japan, Kazuo Yagi became well-known for having marked a revolutionary moment in the modern history of pottery in Japan with his

avant-garde sculptural work. Despite the radical appearance of his work in the culture of traditional Kyoto pottery, his approach to materials is informed by 'tradition' and embraced the idea of *Utsushi* (copy) which doesn't prohibit the possibility of a subjective interpretation. He argues that the limitations, rather suggest vast possibilities for acquiring knowledge and developing one's own subjective interpretation within its limits. Ishida says that *shibari* is a barometer that indicates the degrees and strength of subjective creativity within the frame of 'tradition'. It varies from subtle to dramatic depending on how tightly you restrict yourself from discovery. The discussion on Ishida's barometer will be enhanced by the ideas of Kenji Kaneko, a leading critic of craft and former curator at the Museum of Art, Tokyo. In inventing the neology 'craftical formation' which argues that a material-centre approach is dominant in contemporary art in Japan, we can identify a strong demand for redressing the Euroamerican centric understanding of art and creativity.

Yuko Kikuchi (PhD) is a Reader at TrAIN (Research Center for Transnational Art Identity and Nation) and CCW College at University of the Arts London. Her key works include *Mingei Theory and Japanese Modernisation: Cultural Nationalism and "Oriental Orientalism"* (2004), *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan* (2007), and two special issues: 'Transnational Modern Design Histories in East Asia,' *The Journal of Design History*, 27- 4 (2014) and 'Negotiating Histories: Traditions in Modern and Contemporary Asia-Pacific Art,' *World Art*, 5-1 (2015). Currently, she is editing *Critical Reader of East Asian Design* (2 vols., Brill), *Gurcharan Singh and his Mingei collection* (exhibition catalogue, Government Museum and Art Gallery in Chandigarh), and writing a monograph on Russel Wright and the Cold War design in Asia to which she was awarded the Terra Foundation Senior Fellowship at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Demonstration

Kazuya Ishida

1. Making a tradition Bizen-style Sake bottle (*tokkuri*)

This demonstration tries to visualise how Bizen's history can be seen in its size, balance and neck.

2. Throwing in blind fold

Important skills for throwing is how to effectively use spinning. The tactile feeling of relying on the spin, and this correspondence comes through fingers rather than eyes. This demonstration tries to present this tactile communication.

3. Spiral technique (*Rahō*)

Ishida makes sculptures and vases with distinctive spiraling marks. This demonstration will show the original technique he has developed. By using centrifugal force and pressing from inside outwards, he makes a cylinder decorated with straight lines on the surface into a round vessel with twisted spiral patterns.

(translated by Yuko Kikuchi)

Kazuya Ishida was born into a family of potters in Bizen, which is now part of the Okayama prefecture in Japan. Bizen is one of the six 'ancient kilns' and is famous for its traditional unglazed high temperature-fired Bizen-style pottery. He uses wood-fired *noborigama* (multiple chamber climbing kiln) and *anagama* (single chamber climbing kiln). He trained with Jun Isezaki (a Living National Treasure in Bizen) for four years, followed by time spent in the UK learning different styles of pottery, before he established his own studio in Bizen. Invited into the Anagama Project run by University of Oxford, he has been a lead resident potter teaching kiln making, firing and pottery making, while lecturing about his craft. He makes sculptures and vases featuring his distinctive spiraling marks, created with a technique using centrifugal force inspired by a teenage love for breakdancing. In using limited materials (specifically, natural clay and natural ash glazes) in line with the Bizen tradition, he explores the rhythms and patterns of Nature. The contemporary forms of his work are a reflection of the primordial, rippled textures and patterns of the ocean bed, tectonic shifts of a cliff face, and the marks that ebbing tides have left on rock pools, pebbles and seashells.



Crescent moon
47 × 23 cm, Stoneware (black clay),
fired in Anagama kiln
2017

Making for others: qualities and narratives in contemporary British tableware pottery

Giorgio Salani

This paper explores the dichotomies challenged by the Utsuwa Utsushi symposium in light of findings from the author's doctoral study of British contemporary hand-thrown tableware. Binary oppositions are discussed through evidence from fieldwork and analysis conducted in three well-established workshops, in which professional potters produce work designed by others. In particular, the study highlights how, even in the Western context of contemporary British craft, the distinction between an 'original' and its 'copy' is problematic and does not help describe the objects in useful terms. Original designs can be inspired by the past, or influenced by other artists, styles and aesthetics linked to processes (e.g. type of firing). Original elements may have originated from other people and times, in many copies.

Designs are not fixed and no technical drawings are used as specifications for the pots produced in the three case studies. The original intent of a master potter is partly hidden behind tacit craft knowledge, the limitation of

simple measures of size and weight, the two-dimensionality of drawings and sketches, and the imperfections of prototypes. These are often used as a reference but only as the start of a conversation with materials which is refined batch after batch.

Apprentices and junior potters are encouraged to look at past examples, learning from the objects, recreating processes based on their knowledge of methods. Potters are inspired by elements in other pots and choose to incorporate them. Each copy is a reinterpretation mediated by an individual potter's material knowledge and making skills. Potters copy other potters through direct teaching and imitation of aesthetics, techniques, and use of tools and machinery. Each process imitated is already a copy of a process, each person offers a reinterpretation of an ideal which is hardly accessible and to some extent is different each time. Videos of processes suggest methods can be singularly captured, but direct comparisons always show some variation. Processes are reinterpreted via personal expression and individual technological styles, and evolve – time after time – with the refinement of skills or the ever-changing conditions of work.

Careful measures of quality control are operated by all potters on each other's output. New work is made in the absence of a fixed model, in a morphogenetic dialogue of copies and copyists. Constant corrections and feedback ensure qualities fall within acceptable standards. The originals are the best pieces, but also the seconds and the rejects that are not destroyed. There is no opposition of copy vs. original, as authenticity is negotiated in each instance.

This shows the simple, common sense contraposition between an original and its copy is in fact irrelevant to the discussion of this type of contemporary functional ware. Instead, a complex negotiation occurs among factors such as knowledge transfer dynamics, personal expression in making work designed by others, division of labour and quality control operations. The discussion provides a rich, problematised account of the making of functional thrown tableware in Britain today.

Giorgio Salani is a maker and PhD researcher at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. His AHRC LDoc study of contemporary British pottery is locating the origins of key handmade qualities and narratives in salient making operations. Giorgio employs social scientific methods of enquiry for investigating contemporary craft making. The systematic analysis of processes is informed by ethnographic fieldwork in professional workshops and reflection on making the same ware 'in the manner of' the participants of the study. His focus on materials, methods and technologies derives from a background in engineering and years of consulting experience.

Borrowing or Stealing: the Dialectical Aesthetic Discourse between Designers and Craft Makers in the Yii Project

Chih-i Lai

One of the most influential and significant design projects in Taiwan in the past 10 years was the Yii project sponsored by the National Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute (NTRDI). It brought out new Taiwanese designs by arranging the collaborations between craft makers and designers. This paper would focus on the dialectic aesthetic discourse observed during my fieldwork on the making of Taiwanese bamboo designs in the Yii project which intended to be marketed overseas. Here I intend to investigate these new Taiwanese bamboo designs from their inception of craft makers' own design ideas regarding to the tradition, the botanic nature, and its functions—as idealist or finalist factors—to further understand how bamboo craft making in Taiwan evolved from making imitations of reproductive traditional objects, to seeking out original and innovative designs.

This collaboration involved traditional techniques and knowledge as well as new ideas and new technology. In the Yii project, designers usually got

inspired by certain pre-existing objects or techniques, then designers would withdraw these inspiration elements from their original context and embedded them with new design discourse. By occupying the previous knowledge of crafts making, the Yii project created an active way of possessing, transforming, and sustaining the tradition. It raised Taiwanese public's attention on the traditional craft, and has the opportunity to evoke the essence of Taiwanese visual culture.

Chih-I Lai is a design anthropologist and currently a museum curator at the National Palace Museum in Taiwan. She had received her MA and PhD degree in Anthropology from the University College London, and her PhD research is focus on bamboo craft and design. Chih-I had curate the NPM Asian Film Festivals for the Japanese films in 2016 and Indian films in 2017. Recently, she conducted two collaborative exhibition projects with the Academia Sinica about the Chinese bronze from Shang Dynasty and the Taiwanese Indigenous Textiles in 2018.



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CCW College and TrAIN, University of the Arts London

