

論文の英文要旨

論文題名 In Search of Universality in Painting— Kitawaki Noboru and Japanese surrealism—

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This work focuses on the Japanese painter Kitawaki Noboru (1901-1951), whose short but very intense period of activity stretches from the early 1930s to the late 1940s. With only one major study on Kitawaki's work in 1968, the artist received little attention until the late 1990s. In fact, it is more generally Japanese surrealism which has for a long time aroused very little interest in Japan, but even more so outside Japan. Kitawaki remained little known until the exhibition *Le Japon des avant-gardes, 1910-1970* (Avant-garde Arts of Japan, 1910-1970), which took place in 1986 at the Centre Pompidou, in Paris. On this occasion, fifteen of his works were presented: he was by far the most represented painter. Another indication of the importance given to him by the organizers of the event: he was the only pre-war artist to whom a room was dedicated. At the time, a few studies appeared to be dealing with Kitawaki and Japanese surrealism, some of which are still important milestones today, but outside Japan, the broader interest in the Japanese avant-garde was—in fact—mainly in post-World War II movements, and artists such as Kitawaki fell back into oblivion.

In 1997, the Tokyo Museum of Modern Art (MOMAT) offered an important retrospective of Kitawaki's work, which was the occasion for many people to discover this unique painter. In addition to the works that were exhibited and included in the catalogue, this work mentions the title of many other works that have disappeared. As such, the exhibition catalogue remains a valuable working tool, even though there are several missing works. At the time of the MOMAT retrospective, several works of unequal importance on Kitawaki were published, which could constitute a second peak of interest in his work, and several studies have dealt with Kitawaki since the end of the 1990s, mainly in Japanese, but with some in English and French. Since then a few studies have appeared; however, with the exception of some first-class studies, most give an image of the painter that is always quite similar, notably based on a relatively tight temporal division.

Indeed, his work is often presented as composed of four distinct periods. From the academic realism of his early days (1930-1936), the painter would then move on to paintings of surrealist inspiration (1936-1939), then to "schematic paintings" (*zushiki kaiga*, 1939-1945), and the end of his life would finally resemble a kind of synthesis of his different experiences, and a reflection on himself, rather than a very distinct current (1945-1951). This temporal division may be justified, since such trends can in fact be seen in broad terms, but it gives the impression of compartmentalized periods, which is not the case. Thus, the influences of surrealism can be felt, even in some of Kitawaki's last works, and clear echoes of his apprenticeship period can be found in some post-war paintings. This is one of the objectives of the present study: to show that his career is not a series of artistic breaks, but rather a true continuity.

The painter's influences were particularly numerous. In addition to painting and pictorial theories, he

was interested in sciences (physics, biology, mathematics...), philosophy (antique as well as contemporary, Western as well as Asian), religion, or theories on poetry or theatre. These influences can be found not only in his works, but also in his writings, since he wrote many texts where he developed the most diverse theories. In fact, Kitawaki's work seems capable of illustrating the richness and abundance of the Japanese avant-garde. Like many Japanese and non-Japanese artists of the same period, he seemed to multiply experiences and to grasp at any straw. However, like beams, all these attempts had a single goal: to find a universality the center of gravity of which would be Japanese.

This question of universality corresponds to the painter's attempt to overcome categories that made less and less sense for him and in which he felt too cramped; and, on the other hand, he felt that these categories could not allow art to reach a functionalism (*kinōshugi*) with unlimited possibilities, which should be its goal. These categories that he wished to overcome were often dualist systems such as the opposition between local and universal; or the opposition between modern or contemporary cultures and traditional ones. The desire to go beyond this also concerned the artistic categories, and more generally cultural, as well as spatial categories (local/universal), and finally temporal categories.

Kitawaki rejected art for art, and saw in it, on the contrary, possibilities that were not decorative but transcendental. Art must allow what no discipline had been able to do so far: to understand the functioning of the universe and man's place in it. However, many attempts have been made over the centuries, and Kitawaki intended to build on some of them: it is a question of combining them, as he combined techniques and patterns on the canvas, to achieve—through a kind of universal knowledge—a solution to what has not yet been solved. A method that can be described as scientific in many ways.

This work has two ambitions: first, to present the question of synthesis and universality in Kitawaki's pictorial and written work and to show the most interesting examples of Kitawaki's work; second, in the form of a list of the painter's works that is as exhaustive as possible, to raise awareness that the painter's work—more than a series of breakdowns—is a coherent whole that tends towards the same direction. These two groups, separated, respond to each other in this work, since the main part will often refer to the list of works, which will also refer to the concepts developed in the first part. Finally, the list of works is intended to fill a gap: there is no comprehensive list of Kitawaki's paintings today, and his work can only be understood in its entirety.