

In the *Gutai Manifesto* there is a line that reads, “To elevate the spirit is to lead matter into the realm of a higher spirit.” During my years with Gutai, I often used oil paint as the material for my self-expression. From around 1973 onward, however, I began working mainly with thread and cloth. Both the materials themselves and the act of stitching with a needle felt close to me, and I believed they might allow for a more distilled form of expression.

Yet once I immersed myself in these NUI (stitch works), the struggle proved even more demanding than when I had worked in oil. Perhaps this, too, was a kind of fate given to me. For that very reason, the sense of fulfillment that came from creating was all the greater. That I have continued to this day—repeating failures, yet stubbornly persisting—must be due to a kind of blessing granted to an artist, something beyond calculation or intention.

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Note: Regarding the starting date of the NUI (stitch works), the following entry appears in Uemae’s diary:

[January 6, 1988: When I checked my diary to determine the year I began making NUI works, I found the date August 21, 1975.]