

Gutai and I

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The first time Yoshihara-sensei praised one of my action-based works was at the second Genbi exhibition. After joining Gutai, I became deeply absorbed in works that required long periods of time. At one point, Sensei even wrote to me, “If you wish, you may stop.” Later, during a two-person exhibition with Rikio Hiroi, he told me, “Don’t leave Gutai.”

At the *International Art of a New Era* exhibition, Michel Tapié placed major works by Yves Klein and Jean Paul Riopelle on either side of my 100 gō painting (Japanese size), then smiled and shook my hand. When Sensei returned from the Gutai exhibition in New York, he told me that my work was drawing attention abroad. At that very time, a solo exhibition organized by Nobuya Abe was fast approaching. When I told Sensei about it, his expression turned stern and he said, “You should cancel it.”

When he came back from a trip to Europe, he brought news that one of my works in the collection of the British collector Denney was still retaining its freshness, and he gave me a souvenir as well. I was deeply moved with gratitude. Supporting a family of five while working as a shipyard laborer, I continued with Gutai — and the memories from those days are endless.

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