

# Women In-Between in Asia: Polyphony by Women

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## Introduction

This will be the first attempt in Japan to hold such an extensive traveling exhibition, gathering together the works of exclusively Asian-born women artists, who either keep on working in Asia or have changed their base of activity to the other regions of the world. Why does it have to be Asia? Why only women? To answer these questions which certainly touch the basic composition of the exhibition, I must start by giving some accounts of how this exhibition came to be conceived.

One of the accounts can be made from my experience in the Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Art, compiling the activities of women artists historically. The first of such exhibitions that I have planned and held was the *Floating Images of Women in Art History* (1997), which took a general view on female images and artworks of women artists up to the contemporary art in western and Japanese art history. Then, the modern art of Japan in the period before World War II to the 1970s, on which I could not have extended my survey in the first exhibition, was compiled in two exhibitions, the *Japanese Women Artists before and after World War II, 1930s-1950s* (2001)<sup>1</sup> and the *Japanese Women Artists in Avant-garde Movements, 1950-1975* (2004).

Then, there came in another element, the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. Since its opening in the year 1999, as a unique museum in Japan, which sets its keynote to introduce Asian art, it has organized many special exhibitions and 4 exhibitions of *Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale*. With the exhibits that they have acquired in their exhibitions as its core, a rich Asian art collection has been built up. Although the number of male artists' works hold unquestionable lead in its collection, Rawanchaikul Toshiko, a curator of the museum, reveals that extremely multifarious and quality works of women artists are included.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, even though the area of my survey, till then, had been limited to the East Asia,<sup>3</sup> my immense interests in the art of more extensive area developed. Such enthusiasm of mine and the interest of Ms. Rawanchaikul in women art met together and converged to the planning of an Asian women artists' art exhibition. For its realization, the long-cherished zeal for the Asian Women art exhibition of Mr. Yasunaga Koichi, the ex-director (present advisor) of the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum was a great support as well. Joining in based on these factors is Tomiyama Megumi,<sup>4</sup> a curator of the Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum, who is setting as her life work the survey and record of women art in Okinawa from the modern time onward, and Hara Maiko, a curator of the Mie Prefectural Art Museum, who originally did research on the representation of Korea during the colonial period in Japanese governmental art exhibitions (*Kanten*) and extended her research towards contemporary art in Indonesia and

Malaysia. Thus, the 4 participating museums came to be determined. Moreover, the survey for this exhibition gave an opportunity to expand awareness towards women's art to Nakao Tomomichi, a curator of the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, who specializes in the study of the modern and contemporary art of the Philippines.<sup>5</sup>

In this text, I will reexamine, to the extent of my personal views, the women art exhibitions which have been held in the Asian region and the world prior to this exhibition. And, taking into account the verification, I will aim at bringing the significance and originality of this exhibition up to the surface.

## 1. Groups and Exhibitions of Asian Women Artists (from the 1980s)

In the 1970s, the zealous emanation of second-wave feminism, which had evolved mainly in North America, well reached and spread amongst women in new Asian nations, achieved by their independence after World War II. Even in those countries which enjoyed democratization brought by the independence, the male-dominant patriarchal social structure was firmly maintained so that, for women, as individual people, the freedom of working in the society and of self-expression were still considerably restricted.

To reform this social system, women tried to embolden themselves by forming groups with a sense of solidarity. Women artists acted alike. From the 1980s, as if a dam had broken, pioneering women artist groups were formed, women artist exhibitions were held and many more burst out in many Asian countries.<sup>6</sup> Without going into detail, let me cite some instances. In Korea, Kim In-Sung, Yun Suknam (p. 74) and other women artists organized the October Group, and started their activity from 1982. In 1987, they formed the Yomiyon Women Artists' Group, as a branch group of the Minzok (People's) Art Association, which belonged to the *Minjung* Art Movement, and put up an annual art show, *Women and Reality*, which continued to be held up to the 10th Exhibition. While, in India, Nalini Malani (p. 104), together with Alpita Singh (p. 60) and other women artists planned the 4 women travelling exhibition named *Through the Looking Glass*, which was set on tour for 3 years from 1987.<sup>7</sup> In the Philippines, women artists like Brenda Fajardo (p. 90) and Imelda Cajipe Endaya (p. 106) formed the women artists group named Kasibulan and were striving to raise women's awareness.<sup>8</sup> All of these activities were carried out by artists.

These movements by women artists were taking root in nations and regions in the 80s, but, in the latter half of the 90s, they started making an international development. On one hand, artists get invited to some authoritative international exhibitions held in Europe, like the *Biennale of Venezia* (1895-) and the *Documenta* (1955-) in Kassel, and

there appear some Asian artists who gain a world-wide reputation in the big wave of globalisation. Amongst them, some women artists were included, despite a smaller number compared to the male artists. There appear also some artists who move their bases to western countries and continue their art activities, such as Shirin Neshat from Iran, who is not included in this exhibition, and Kimsooja (p. 126) from Korea and Shiota Chiharu (p. 122) from Japan. On the other hand, we start seeing increasing numbers of nations or cities in Asia which organize international exhibitions on their own to set for their cultural strategy, as the result of their economic development. The *Biennale of Sidney* (1973-) in Australia, the *Triennale-India* (New Delhi, 1968-2005), the *Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh* (1981-) are pathfinders in this period, and are followed by the *Asia Pacific Triennial* (Brisbane, 1993-) marking the second such exhibition in Australia, the *Gwangju Biennale* (1995-) and, a little later on, the *Busan Biennale* (2000-) in Korea, the *Shanghai Biennale* (1996-) and the *Guangzhou Triennial* (2002-) in China, and the *Taipei Biennial* (1998-). While, in Japan, we can cite the *Asian Art Show* (Fukuoka Art Museum, 1980-1994) as a forerunner of this sort, the *Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale* (1999-) as a successor, and the *Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale* (2000-) and the *Yokohama Triennale* (2001-), both of which made a delayed appearance in the Asian art scene, yet the size of which are remarkable, and the *Aichi Triennale* (2010-) as the latest comer to the scene. In recent years, the *Singapore Biennale* (2006-) is noticeable, making a considerable leap as a hub of Asian contemporary art.

There are quite interesting subjects like figuring out how Asian women artists came to gain their positions or how they went on metamorphosing after having been consumed on the glamorous stages of international exhibitions which were directly connected to their reputation in the international art market. However, as it surpasses the limit of this essay, it has to be left for the themes of future survey and research. What I'd rather describe now is the exhibitions which were organized by women artists themselves with their grass-roots type network in various places in Asia. In 1997, Nitaya Ueareeworakul and Varsha Nair initiated the *Womanifesto* in Thailand.<sup>9</sup> Beside the exhibition, other activities like workshops and artists-in-residence programs were prepared, aiming at international exchange amongst women artists and art critics, between themselves and, further, the exchange between art and local communities. It was repeated until the year 2008. The *Text and Subtext* exhibition, held in the Lasalle-SIA College of Arts in Singapore in 2000, was a precursor of Pan Asian women artists exhibition inclusive of Australia. Its catalogue and the collection of essays published at the same time were replete.<sup>10</sup> From Japan, Inoue Hiroko (p. 120) and Ito Tari (p. 118) were included in the participating women artists, bringing the total number of 22. Although the size of the exhibition was small and only a limited number of artists were invited, it can be considered to be a similar type of exhibition, having a purpose and a viewpoint common to our exhibition. It is quite regrettable that I could not visit it.

In 1994 in Korea, Kim Hong-hee,<sup>11</sup> an art critic, planned and held the *Woman, The Difference and the Power—Feminine Art and Feminist Art* exhibition, participation by Yun Suknam<sup>12</sup> and many other women artists. In 1999, art critics Kim Hong-hee, Kim Sun-hee and Beck Jee-sook and artists Yun Suknam and Park Young-sook got together and formed the Feminist Artists' Network (FAN), and held the *Women's Art Festival : Patjis on Parade* exhibition. This Group organized a second exhibition (2002), entitled *East Asian Women and Herstories*, expanding

its exhibited artists to East Asian countries like the Philippines, Thailand, China, Taiwan and Japan.<sup>13</sup> From Japan, Ito Tari and Shimada Yoshiko participated.

Attending the vernisage of the *Women in the East Asia* exhibition, I saw with my own eyes, for the first time, the aggressive artworks executed with high social awareness of Asian women artists, and had a great opportunity to meet closely those artists as well. It may safely be said that my encounter with that very exhibition could have been the first opportunity to get the idea of planning our exhibition. And to a person like me whose occasions to survey systematically the Asian Art have been quite scarce, another opportunity came by chance. I happened to be connected to another women artists group exhibition, *Trauma, Interrupted*, which was planned and realized by Flaudette May Datuin in 2007.<sup>14</sup> It can be considered to be a hand-made exhibition. As they could not get enough subsidy for it, it happened only by each artist's effort to obtain the necessary funds. Professor Datuin and students of the University of the Philippines, working side by side, with continual and unfatigable dialogues with the artists who had come to Manila at their own expenses, managed somehow to attain the opening day after their operation (of trial and error, conflict and negotiation) with their unique inimitable *lento tempo*. Having had the opportunity to witness their operation was quite a rare but precious experience for myself who is used to the efficient operations of Japanese Museums.<sup>15</sup>

Those activities of women artists, art historians and art critics of each country in Asia should be described more precisely and appropriately, with further research, but, it would again exceed the scope of this essay. I just leave the task to the essays by the specialists of each country or each region in this catalogue.

## 2. International Women Artists Exhibitions in the World (since 2000)

Now, let us turn our eyes towards the world again and take a general view on women artists exhibitions in western countries which were considered to be developed countries in the sense of feminism. In the United States, the women's liberation movement from the 1970s has been a driving force to lodge a protest against and to seek the rectification of the antiquated ideology which caused discrimination against women or misogyny in society and was preventing women from gaining ground in various domains in public affairs. Yet even for the United States, the 1980s - 90s was said to be the era of backlash against feminism. In the field of art as well, still as low as ever was the ratio of women artists who were well evaluated, or whose works were acquired by museums, or exhibited at permanent exhibitions. According to Yoshimoto Midori,<sup>16</sup> a scholar living in the United States, in order to break down such a situation then, "The Feminist Art Project" (TFAP)<sup>17</sup> was inaugurated in 2006 by some art historians, curators and artists. And in 2007, two large-scale international women art exhibitions were held in the east and the west of the North American Continent, in conjunction with TFAP. They are the *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* exhibition (which went on a tour from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles to Washington, to New York, and to Vancouver in Canada)<sup>18</sup> and the *Global Feminisms*, new directions in contemporary art (traveled from the Brooklyn Museum to Wellesley College).<sup>19</sup> They became widely acknowledged as an upsurge of feminism art in the US, commemorating the 35th anniversary of the earlier feminist movements and group formations in the 1970s. Although I, myself, did not have a pleasure of visiting either of them, let me venture to outline the content of each exhibition and to point out several issues, referring to the above-cited essay of Yoshimoto

and the exhibition catalogues.

First of all, *WACK!* was a retrospective exhibition covering 430 pieces of artwork which were considered to be the core of feminist art mainly on the American art stage. They had expanded their view towards European artists, yet the majority of the 120 chosen artists were white, western women artists with only a few Asian artists who were active in the American art scene.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the *Global Feminisms* was an exhibition of the latest work created in and after 1990 by some 90 young artists (who were born in and after 1960) of about 50 countries in East Europe, Asia and Africa. Its remarkable achievement was that it opened up its border to the artists of non-Western areas, who were lacking in *WACK!*. Despite its positive element, in the actual venue, the exhibition was composed with *Dinner Party*, the permanent exhibit of Judy Chicago in the Brooklyn Museum, laid in the centre room, and the other exhibits being laid out starting from the rooms fringed around the centre room in three directions. This arrangement was said to have caused a cynical outcome, renewing the impression of “the artists from the marginal areas of the world to have been literally chased out to the periphery of the venue.”<sup>21</sup> Another thing blemishing this exhibition was that the artists were chosen with a certain age limit, so that the feminist artists who are older but still creative with full energy were left out.<sup>22</sup>

Both exhibitions were significant in the sense that they encouraged feminist art which had long been depressed and that each one, in its own way, had expanded the historical view and the international outlook in the US. Nevertheless, the argument that Yoshimoto Midori indicates<sup>23</sup> says much to the point that the feminism is still a privilege of white middle-class women, and that, in its practice, it always ends up with the problems of racial or class differentials.

In May 2009 at the Pompidou Centre in Paris as well, the permanent exhibition entitled *elles@centrepompidou* started showing only women artists' artworks (architecture, art, design and photograph) in their collection, with a plan of one year. However, its popularity made it prolonged till February of 2011.<sup>24</sup> I could visit and witness this unique exhibition, in which some 500 exhibits by over 200 women artists were filling up the entire 4th floor and a part of the 5th floor of the Pompidou Centre. As the exhibits were limited to possessions of the Pompidou, there were some shortcomings like the scarcity of avant-garde artists of the pre-war time, the absence of important women artists who were active elsewhere other than in Europe, and especially the poor collection of women artists of Asian origin.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, as it was said that some exhibited pieces of artworks like those of Orlan and Rachel Whiteread had been acquired on the occasion,<sup>26</sup> if the exhibition has accelerated the purchase of women artists' works, it was good enough. Before everything else, the fact that the permanent exhibition of Pompidou Centre was occupied by women artists for almost 2 years was a stirring feat, especially for France,<sup>27</sup> which had been falling behind in the fields of Feminism and Gender criticism in contemporary art.

Finally, even though it was not of international scale, I would also like to refer to the *Eonni is Back* exhibition,<sup>28</sup> which was held locally at the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art in Korea in 2008. To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the death of Na Hye-sok (1896-1948), the first woman oil painter who hails from Suwon City in Gyeonggi-do, the exhibition was organized with 26 Korean women artists and one male artist, setting, at its core, works of Yun Suknam, a pioneer of feminism art in Korea. It was an intellectually stimulating exhibition in which the women and art in Korea was inspected historically and from the

contemporary critical viewpoint. When it comes to the aforesaid large and global-scaled exhibitions with several hundreds exhibits by over 100 artists, even on the side of viewers a tough spirit and body is required to properly figure out their curatorial intentions and eventually to comprehend them well. The *Eonni is Back* exhibition, on the contrary, consisted of a rather small number of artists' works, and 4 women-related keywords, “Womad (Women Nomad),” “Herstory,” “Sister Act” and “Femme Fatale,” were given to help the comprehension of works. The viewers could easily feel how contemporary Korean women artists were vividly tackling with, as their own themes, problems like gender, society, history, politics, women's bodies and illusions plated on women, and how they are getting versatile results in their activities. Furthermore, the viewers could also get encouragement from their power.

### 3. Women Artists Exhibitions in Japan: Towards the *Women In-Between: Asian Women Artists 1984-2012*

Now, if we turn to women and art exhibitions in Japan, what could be the situation? As a pioneer, the *Exploring the Unknown Self, Self-Portraits of Contemporary Women* (Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 1991) was organized by Kasahara Michiko, a curator of the Museum. It was well followed by several exhibitions with gender points of view in the middle of the 1990s, yet concurrently, the bashings on the introduction of gender viewpoint were exchanged<sup>29</sup> including in domains like museums and art history research. Later on in 2006 as well, the gender backlash raged in some lecture meetings in public institutions.<sup>30</sup> Thus, in Japanese society, there rises intermittently a refusal reaction of people who have a misunderstanding or a prejudice against the idea of gender. Therefore, gender understanding hardly penetrates into Japanese society.

Under that situation of society, it would be worthwhile mentioning two exhibitions which were planned by the artists themselves. They are the *Women Breaking Boundaries 21* exhibition (at the Hillside Forum, 17<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2001)<sup>31</sup> and the *Borderline Cases, Women on the Borderlines* exhibition (at A.R.T., 26<sup>th</sup> June – 17<sup>th</sup> July in 2004).<sup>32</sup> The former, organized by the WAN (Women's Art Network) Executive Committee, was enriched with activities like symposia, performances and artist-talks by participating artists including 6 women artists from Asia. The exhibits consisted of works by 39 groups of artists from Japan and Asia. The latter was an artist-initiated exhibition, organized by F.A.A.B./ *Borderline Cases* Exhibition Committee, participated by Japanese and Korean women artists, with exhibits and performances by 7 artists (Guest Curator: Kim Sunhee). Having had constraints in venues and funds, neither could not be considered to have achieved a satisfactory effect as exhibitions. Yet, they could invite Asian artists to Japan, and as a consequence, women of Japan and other Asian regions could meet face-to face, get directly connected and have dialogues. Those 2 exhibitions are considered to be extremely significant.

As we can see, the consciousness of art and gender or the exchange of women artists in the Asian region were led by the artists themselves in the 2000s, with some exceptions like the exhibitions by curators such as Kasahara Michiko.<sup>33</sup> In and after 2010, Asian contemporary women's art exhibitions started being planned even in public museums. Some examples are the *Quiet Attentions: Departure From Women* exhibition (at Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower Mito, 12<sup>th</sup> Feb. – 8<sup>th</sup> May in 2011, discontinued after 11<sup>th</sup> Mar.) which was discontinued due to the Great East Japan Earthquake, the *Inner Voices* exhibition (at the 21st Century

Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, 30<sup>th</sup> July – 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011) and the *What a Wonderful World: Visions in Contemporary Asian Art of Our World Today* exhibition (at the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, 24<sup>th</sup> Mar. – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2012), which was with only 2 women artists amongst 7 Asian artists.

Unfortunately, I could not see the *Quiet Attentions* exhibition. Takahashi Mizuki, a curator of the exhibition, writes in her essay in the catalogue that her historical inspection, focusing on the issue of “women” in art, failed to find a common form to all the works of the contemporary women artists in the exhibition, and concluded that, after all, those exhibits reveal “the impossibility of appraising the essence of women’s artworks.”<sup>34</sup> And in the *Inner Voices* exhibition, Kurosawa Hiromi, a curator, recognizes that the women artists consider that “a rigidly established identity, as well as identities rooted in both traditions and authority, restrict freedom,” and confirms that “women artists’ free thinking and brave acts of crossing borders should be encouraged,” as they have had enough restrictions historically.<sup>35</sup>

After all, they were exhibitions to show that women artists were at last expressing themselves freely and in a diversified manner, as a result of the dissolution of the époque and the environment where women had been forced into a gender role (or perhaps, as women of ability have surmounted the constraints).<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, can we be so easily convinced? We presume that the women artists who can enjoy such freedom should be quite limited number even in the whole world. Hereupon, I remember the bitter realization of “running continually into the problems of racial and class differentials” that Yoshimoto Miodori experienced in taking part closely in 2 large-scale women artist exhibitions in the US, which is often considered to be a feminism-developed country. When we turn to the Asian region, the gender problem gets tangled naturally with not only restrictions of races or classes but also various constraints like disparity in wealth or disputes between different religions or ethnic groups. It cannot be asserted to be a past matter that the generations of our mothers or grandmothers have tackled.<sup>37</sup>

The *Women In-Between: Asian Women Artists 1984-2012* exhibition is the first extensive exhibition in Japan, planned and held with the spirit of scooping up as widely as possible the activities of the Asian women who live in those diverse environments. The composition of the exhibition is not done according to nations nor regions but based on 5 concepts concerning women, “1. Women’s Bodies: Sites of Reproduction/Multiplication, Seduction and Violence,” “2. Women and Societies: (1) The Roles of Women and Men, and the Bonds Between Women, (2) The Diaspora and the Marginalized People,” “3. Women and Histories: War, Violence, Death and Memory,” “4. Women’s Techniques and Materials: The Periphery of ‘Art,’” “5. The Lives of Women: Departing On Her Own.” As for the contents of each Chapter, the commentaries on Chapters or on artists and exhibits can be referred to. Nevertheless, it is needless to say that these keywords cannot totally categorize and sort out the works of Asian women artists, and it is certainly not our intention.

Let us take, for instance, the paintings by Jung Jungyeob (p. 43) of Korea, in which she painted every grain of the red beans which filled up the whole surface of her canvas. We included her works in Chapter 1 “Women’s Bodies” from its image of “Reproduction/Multiplication” on the overwhelming quantity of beans, whereas Jung Jungyeob, from her 20s, has been active as a feminism activist, and is still trying to abolish the fixed gender role, being extremely conscious

about the concept of Chapter 2 “Women and Societies: (1) The Roles of Women and Men.” And as for Kimsooja’s works (p. 126) with cloth as its media, she symbolically implies the women related to the world through the action of sewing with needle and thread. It was included to Chapter 4 “Women’s Techniques and Materials” yet she is profoundly concerned about the concept of Chapter 2 “Women and Societies: (2) The Diaspora and the Marginalized People.” Thus, these women living in Asia, through their art, express the themes that they are fixed into in their real lives, and, by doing so, they are creating awareness of injustice, absurdity and inequality of the world to as many people as possible. Instead of being driven to despair for all that, they are trying to throw a ray of hope for a positive future by awakening imagination towards the pain of people in a weaker situation.

“Women In-Between” designates a sort of women who carry out their role to mediate in such areas of confrontation as races, borders, religions or genders, without anchoring fast in a certain fixed value or attitude, standing not in the centre but interstices as in-between existences because of the given condition of women as a minority. From the works of 50 women artists<sup>38</sup> assembled from 16 Asian countries and regions for this exhibition, what sort of voices will we be able to hear? Will they be clamours or murmurs, pathetic cries or cozy pacifications? What can be heard, then again, might be left to the viewers. Asian women do not utter in the least only stealthy voices, nor do they keep silence. As Ikeuchi Yasuko writes in her critique of *The Women, The Orphan, and The Tiger* by Jane Jin Kaisen (p. 78), their voices can be well expressed with “a chorus of voices, washing over one another and impossible to separate individually.”<sup>39</sup> Our earnest wish in this exhibition is that their various voices are heard by as many people as possible. Undoubtedly, their voices would be heard as a multifarious and eloquent call to beckon imaginations and renewed arguments, without recurring to the essentials of “femininity.”<sup>40</sup> The participating Japanese artists must be also uttering in chorus with Asian women’s multi-layered voices to make their polyphony even more profound.<sup>41</sup>

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(translated by Takahashi Mihoko)

<sup>1</sup> As for the result of investigation and research of the exhibition, I made oral reports in Korea (Symposium “Women in Art Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea & Japan,” May 2002, Ewha Womans University Museum) and in New York (“Critical Horizons: A Symposium of Japanese Art in Memory of Chino Kaori,” March 2003, Colombia Univ., Institute of Fine Arts, NYU), and the written report was published.

<sup>2</sup> Oral report made by Rawanchaikul Toshiko on “Asian Women Artist in the Collection of Fukuoka Asian Art Museum” at the International Symposium “Current Situation of Gender Studies and Art – Rethinking ‘Globalism,’” organized by KAKEN “Study on Women Artists in the 20th Century and Their Visual Representations – Memories of War and Diaspora in Asia” (Basic Study B), supported by Image & Gender Kenkyukai (Study Group), 14th Dec. 2008, Musashi University. According to this report, FAAM possesses 2,345 works (as of 2008) from 21 nations and regions, of which 252 works are by some 85 women artists, while 1,371 works are by 530 male artists. The following text to be referred to: Rawanchaikul Toshiko “Asia of women artists – focusing on works from the 1970s to the 1980s,” Report of KAKEN (Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research), published in 2011, by Institute of Japanese Studies, Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University (Kitahara Megumi), pp.99-108.

<sup>3</sup> Since the first visit to Korea in 2002, introduced by Ms. Kim Hyesin, I have visited Korea almost every year to attend art exhibitions and symposia. Beside the researches on the Philippines in 2008, I also extensively set for the researches of China (2009), Taiwan (2010), supported by a program of the KAKEN with Ms. Kitahara Megumi as the representative. Then, I went on to Vietnam (2012) survey as well, for the preparation of this exhibition.

<sup>4</sup> Tomiyama Megumi, “In-between Subject and Object – Okinawa Women Art Study (1),” *Research Bulletin of the Art Museum*, Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum, 2012, pp. 41-56. Curator Tomiyama organized the following 2 symposia, setting women art in Okinawa as the main theme. “A view on women art from Okinawa,” 9th Oct. 2010, and “A view on women art from Okinawa 2,” 15th Oct. 2011, both at Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum.

<sup>5</sup> With a curator, Nakao Tomomichi, I carried out surveys on women artists in India and Singapore, in the period of 12th – 22nd Dec. 2012, as a preparation of this exhibition. Especially the survey on India was fulfilling and we could interview over 20 women artists. The title “Women In-Between” was inspired by some dialogues at that time. The excellent activities of Indian women artists are not sufficiently introduced this time, so that another opportunity to realize an exhibition centering around the Indian women artists works is hoped for.

<sup>6</sup> In Japan, women artists’ groups and exhibitions started to get organized in the 1930s, and in 1946, riding on a wave of democratization after the War, the “Association of Women Artists” was founded. The tendency to form women artists’ groups after the War spread to the local regions and prefectures. The catalogue of *Japanese Women Artists before and after World War II, 1930s - 1950s* exhibition to be referred to. However, those groups, later, ended up becoming conservative ones with mostly paintings as their main stream, having some outstanding exceptions.

<sup>7</sup> Essay by Nalini Malani in this catalogue to be referred to. pp. 184-185.

<sup>8</sup> Claudette May Datuin “The 70s – 80s in Philippines: Women Stepping Out” of this catalogue, to be referred to. p. 171.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.womanifesto.com/about/>, Somporn Rodboon “Contemporary Women Art Scene in Thailand” to be referred to. pp. 176-177.

<sup>10</sup> 22 artists have participated from the Philippines, Korea, China, Taiwan, Australia, Japan, India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Singapore. *Text & Subtext, International Contemporary Asian Women Artists Exhibition*, Earl Lu Gallery, Lasalle-SIA College of Arts, 2000. The collection of essays by art critics from each country was published, in which included my essay: Kokatsu Reiko “Japanese Art in the 1990s at the Borderline Between Inside and Outside,” Binghui Huangfu (ed.), *Text & Subtext, Contemporary Art and Asian Woman*, Earl Lu Gallery, Lasalle-SIA College of Arts, 2000, pp.107-117.

<sup>11</sup> Kim Honghee supervised szamzie space (2000-2010) at the central part of Seoul, organised artist-in-residence programs, placed side-by-side a gallery space and trained many young artists. In the meanwhile, she played the roles of Commissioner of Korean pavilion at the *Biennale di Venezia* (2003), the General Director of the *Gwangju Biennale* (2006), and the director of the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art (2006-2011), she is now the director of the Seoul Museum of Art (2012-). She is a feminist, central figure of traction to pull internationally the Korean contemporary art.

<sup>12</sup> Yun Suknam, artist who takes the standing-point of driving forward women-indigenous expressions in art, protested to the fact that she was included in the category of the “Feminine Art” in this exhibition. She seems to have expressed dissent from being confined in a ghettoized category like Feminism. “<Lecture text of Yun Suknam> Why do I make Art?” (15th Jan. 2011, Waseda Hoshien), Report on research of Grants-in-Aid of KAKEN “Study on Women Artists in 20th Century and their Visual Representations – Memories of War and Diaspora in Asia” published by Institute of Japanese Studies, Graduate School of letters, Osaka University (Kitahara Megumi), 2011, p.121.

<sup>13</sup> Invited to the *Another History of Art: Representation of Femininity* exhibition and its commemorating symposium which was held at the Ewha Womans University Museum, I made oral report on the research of “Japanese Women Artists before and after World War II, 1930s – 1950s” (can be referred to the note 1). As my visit was coincided with the exhibiting period of the *East Asian Women and Herstories* exhibition held by FAN, I could witness it as well.

<sup>14</sup> Claudette May Datuin “Feminist art – somehow, somewhere: curating ‘trauma, interrupted’” (translated into Japanese by Kokatsu Reiko) in *Image & Gender*, the Eighth issue, Image & Gender Kenkyukai, 2008, pp. 6-16. When Datuin was staying in Japan in 2005 for the survey on women artists with the Nippon Foundation Grant, I got acquainted with her in the Image & Gender Kenkyukai, and joined her for her surveys in Fukuoka – Kumamoto. She was also invited to the International Symposium “Creative Power of Women and Fabric” organized by Prof. Wakakusa Midori at the Institute for Woman’s Studies in Kawamura Gakuen Woman’s University, in Oct. 2005. She delivered the keynote address entitled “Reclaiming the Southeast Asian Goddess: Examples from Contemporary Art by Women (Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia),” *Annual Review of Gender Studies*, the forth issue, Center for Gender Studies, Kawamura Gakuen Woman’s University, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Kokatsu Reiko “Women and Art in the Philippines – around the ‘trauma, interrupted,’” *News Letter of Club for Art Action History*, No.102, 2009, pp.7-15 to be referred to. From Japan,

participated Ito Tari, Nakanishi Miho, Watabiki Nobuko and Kum Soni.

<sup>16</sup> Yoshimoto Midori “Current Situation of Feminism and Art in America,” *Image & Gender*, the Eighth issue, Image & Gender Kenkyukai, 2008, pp.37-44.

<sup>17</sup> <http://feministartproject.rutgers.edu/home/> to be referred to.

<sup>18</sup> Cornelia Butler (ed.), *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Maura Reilly, Linda Nochlin (ed.), *Global Feminisms, New Directions in Contemporary Art*, Brooklyn Museum, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> 6 artists, namely, Ono Yoko, Kubota Shigeoko, Kusama Yayoi, Idemitsu Mako, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Zarina (Hashmi).

<sup>21</sup> Yoshimoto Midori, *ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>22</sup> Replying to the survey of Maura Reilly, I recommended Yun Suknam and Inoue Hiroko, but they were not included because of age-limit. Reilly had also surveyed Shimada Yoshiko, BuBu de la Madeleine from Japan, yet, they were not chosen from the same constraint.

<sup>23</sup> Yoshimoto, *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> *elles@centrepompidou, artists femmes dans la collection de musée national d’art moderne, centre de création industrielle* (cat d’expo.), centre pompidou, 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Works of Japanese artists like Kusama Yayoi, Tanaka Atsuko and Onodera Yuki, residing in Paris, were exhibited all together with those of Ono Yoko, Saito Takako and Shiomi Mieko in their Fluxus period. From Korea, there were none of Kimsooja nor of Lee Bul, but only one of Koo Jeong-A, resident in Paris. None by the other Artists of Asian descent was included.

<sup>26</sup> Okabe Aomi, Exhibition review: “elles@centrepompidou, artists femmes dans la collection de musée national d’art moderne,” *Image and Gender*, the tenth issue, Image & Gender Kenkyukai, 2010, pp.111-112.

<sup>27</sup> As for art, feminism and gender in France, the following essays could be referred to. Okabe Aomi “Gender and Art in France,” *Image and Gender*, the Eighth issue, Image & Gender Kenkyukai, 2008, pp. 57-67. Catherine Gonnard et Elisabeth Lebovici, *femme artistes/artistes femmes*, Editions Hazan, Paris, 2007.

<sup>28</sup> *Eonni is Back!*, Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art. “Eonni” is a familiar term for “elder sister” in Korean. The senior women artists were called “Eonni” with intimacy.

<sup>29</sup> Chino Kaori “Gender Debates in the domain of Museum and Art History 1997-1998,” Kumakura Takaaki/Chino Kaori (ed.) *Women? Japan? Beauty? Toward a New Gender Criticism*, Keio University Press, 1999, pp. 117-154. As for the women artists exhibitions or the exhibitions from the gender view-point in Japanese art museums, the following text of mine can be referred to: Kokatsu Reiko “Concerning the Introduction of Viewpoint of Gender in the Museums in Japan,” *Image & Gender*, the Seventh issue, Image & Gender Kenkyukai, 2007, pp. 14-25.

<sup>30</sup> Wakakuwa Midori, Kato Shuichi, Minagawa Masumi and Akaishi Chieko (eds.), *Overcoming the crisis of “gender” – Thorough discussion: Backlash*, Seikyusha, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> *Document: Women Breaking Boundaries 21*, Women’s Art Network, 2001. Kitahara Megumi “Attention: Women At Work – ‘Women Breaking Boundaries 21’ exhibition,” *Impaction*, the 123rd issue, Feb. 2001, pp.112-121.

<sup>32</sup> <http://home.interlink.or.jp/~reflect/borderlinecases/index.html>

Kokatsu Reiko “In the era of ‘Intolerance,’ Based on the Co-responding, ‘Borderline Cases: Women on the borderline,’” *Aida (Between)*, the 104th issue, the “Aida” no Kai (Association of Between), Aug. 2004, pp. 2-14, to be referred to.

<sup>33</sup> *Exploring the Unknown Self: Self-portraits of Contemporary Women*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 27th June – 20th Aug. 1991. *Gender – Beyond Memory: The Works of Contemporary Women Artists*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, 5th Sept. – 27th Oct. 1996. *MOT Annual 2005 Life Actually*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 15th Jan. – 21st March 2005. Both exhibitions were of women photographers and women artists in Japan and North America, with a view-point of gender, curated by Kasahara Michiko.

*Images of Women in Japanese Contemporary Art 1930s-90s*, Shoto Museum of Art, 1996-97, curated by Mitsuda Yuri. Those aforementioned exhibitions I organized.

<sup>34</sup> Takahashi Mizuki “Art as a Blank Map,” *Quiet Attentions: Departure from Women*, exhibition catalogue, pp. 98-111.

<sup>35</sup> Kurosawa Hiromi “Inner Voices,” *Inner Voices*, exhibition catalogue, pp. 4-10.

<sup>36</sup> Common to the artists included in Chapter 5, “The Lives of Women – Departing On Her Own,” of this exhibition. Shilpa Gupta, answering to the interview by Nakao and me (2011.12.14), says “I might have been called feminist in my mother’s generation, but it’s too much! I do not want to be categorized.” In the *Inner Voices* exhibition, there were many exhibits with the theme focused on the historical or social issues concerning women, like those of Yee I-Lann, Jemima Wyman, Shiota Chiharu and Oh Haji, yet, such theme was not converged as the concept of exhibition.

<sup>37</sup> This might also apply to the situation in Japan. Japanese women seem to be feeling less the gender discrimination as the age bracket gets younger. Yet, in recent years when the age discrimination and social gap are rather increasing, the gender issue is undoubtedly still there, intertwining with those social and age issues.

<sup>38</sup> Depending on the venue, the exhibiting artists or the number of exhibits vary.

<sup>39</sup> Ikeuchi Yasuko “Voices and narratives opening up a site of contestation,” *Impaction*, the 180th issue, June 2011, pp. 206-210. The following cite is the English version: <http://www.itinerantsendforitinerant.org/>

<sup>40</sup> If we quote again from the words of Ms. Ikeuchi in her critique on Kaisen, “This is a call that repeatedly opens up a genealogy of diverse and antagonistic narratives that are neither linear nor monolithic.” *Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>41</sup> About the Japanese women artists, the following essay of mine could be referred to. Kokatsu Reiko “Standing on the Borderline: Expressions by Women in the 1990s and 2000s,” *Report of the Symposium “Women Artists of Contemporary Asia”* for the 110th Anniversary Project in Joshibi University of Art and Design, 2011, pp. 68-79.