

Ay-O: Over the Rainbow Once More

'The Rainbow Artist' lands in Hiroshima! A Retrospective Exhibition Spanning More Than Fifty Years

Ay-O: Over the Rainbow Once More is a large-scale retrospective exhibition looking back on more than fifty years of the career of one of the foremost Japanese avant-garde artists, Ay-O (born 1931), known as 'The Rainbow Artist'. In the 1950s, Ay-O joined the Demokrato Artists Association, which was formed in criticism of existing art groups. His avant-garde activities have since continued to this day, crossing a variety of mediums, from two-dimensional oil paintings and prints to so-called 'environments', or installations that involve their surrounding environments and appeal to their viewers' five senses. By reviewing the artist's career, this retrospective presents a reconsideration of the rich diversity of Ay-O's expression, which stems from a voracious spirit of experimentation.

The Tireless Pursuit for New Modes of Expression—Tracing a History of Creation in Painting, Prints, Objects, Performances, Installations and Other Various Genres

Born in Ibaraki Prefecture in 1931, Ay-O, together with On Kawara and others, joined the Demokrato Artists Association—an artists' association formed around EiQ, an avant-garde artist who represents postwar Japan—in 1953, and attracted attention with the works he presented in such exhibitions as the Demokrato Exhibition and the Yomiuri Independent Exhibition. He also became acquainted with the art critic Sadajiro Kubo around this time, which led him to become more active in printmaking. Prints were still considered to be a lower art form than such mediums as oil painting and sculpture at this time. Ay-O contributed to moving prints onto the center stage of artistic expression, along with other Demokrato members such as Masuo Ikeda, and the medium eventually came to hold an important position in his work.

In 1958, Ay-O traveled and relocated to New York, with a strong admiration for Marcel Duchamp and Jackson Pollock at heart. There, he joined the avant-garde art movement 'Fluxus', led by George Maciunas, and took on the challenge of working with a variety of different forms of expression. As a Fluxus member, he participated in performances by creators from different fields such as artists and musicians, known as 'events', and created works with the new concept of 'multiples' which made them available to a greater number of people. He also made installations known as 'environments' and many other works that could be directly touched and experienced by viewers. Finally, he rebelled against the concept of creating works consisting of lines, instead filling his motifs with the colors of the spectrum, from red to violet. Ay-O's struggle with the rainbow was expressed in a variety of genres including prints, paintings, and installations, bringing him international renown as 'The Rainbow Artist'.

Ay-O's Spirit of the Avant-Garde, in Over 100 Works

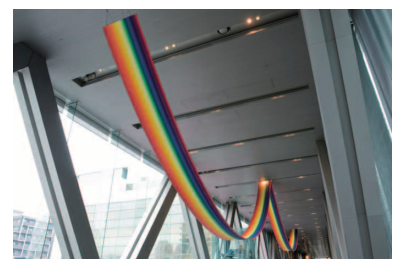
The present exhibition introduces Ay-O's spirit of the avant-garde by tracing the full scope of his activity through his famous rainbow series, installations that can be directly experienced by viewers, documentation of performances and events that took place around the world, among other exhibits.



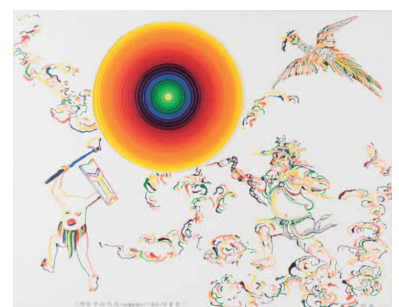
Adam and Eve
1967-71
Collection of Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo



Finger Box Kit
c.1963



25-meter Rainbow
1986
Photo: Eiji INA



Seihei Koho Keiten: From Shan Hai Jin Or Else Courage
2011

- **Duration:** Saturday, November 3, 2012- Monday, January 14, 2013
- **Opening hours:** 10:00-17:00 (Last Admission 16:30)
- **Closed:** Mondays (except December 24), December 25, and December 27-January 1
- **Admission charges:** Adults 1,000 (800) yen, College Students 700 (600) yen, High School Students 500 (400) yen *Figures in brackets () are the charges for advance-purchase and groups of 30 or more persons. *Junior high school students and younger and adults over 65 years of age: Free admission *Free admission for all on November 3 (Culture Day)
- **Organizers:** The Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, The Yomiuri Shimbun, The Japan Association of Art Museums
- **Sponsored by:** Lion Corporation, Shimizu Corporation, Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd., SOMPO JAPAN INSURANCE Inc.
- **Supported by:** Hiroshima Prefecture, Hiroshima Municipal Board of Education, Hiroshima FM Broad Casting Co., Ltd., Onomichi FM Broad Casting Co., Ltd.

Biography

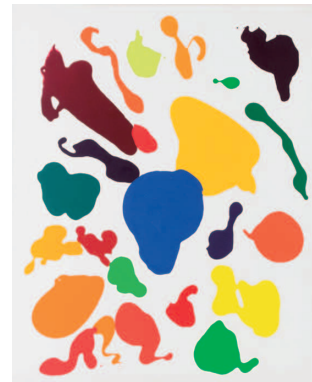
- 1931 Born in Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan
- 1953 Joined the Demokrato Artists Association
- 1954 Graduated from the Art Department, Faculty of Education, Tokyo University of Education
- 1958 Moved to New York (based in New York until 2006)
- c. 1962 Joined Fluxus
- 1966 Represented Japan pavillion at the Venice Biennale
- 1970 *Rainbow Environment No. 7: Tactile Rainbow Room* (Expo '70, Osaka)
- 1971 Represented Japan at the São Paulo Biennial (awarded Banco do Brasil prize)
- 1986 *Rainbow Happening No. 16: 25-meter Rainbow Event* (Eiheiji Temple, Fukui)
- 1987 *Rainbow Happening No. 17: 300-meter Rainbow Eiffel Tower Project* (Eiffel Tower, Paris)
- 1990s Participated in many exhibitions related to Fluxus
- 2006 "Over the Rainbow: Ay-O Retrospective 1950–2006" (Fukui Fine Arts Museum and Miyazaki Prefectural Art Museum)
- 2010 "Ay-O 1950s–2010: A Retrospective" (Tsukuba Museum of Art, Ibaraki)

Highlights

- Tracing more than 50 years of creation of 'rainbows' and beyond
- Ay-O has constantly sought after 'new modes of expression'. The history of his work with a variety of different means of expression that cross the bounds of traditional genres—from two-dimensional to three-dimensional works, performances, installations, and so on—is introduced through works ranging from his earliest days to his latest work.
- Featuring works that are directly touched and experienced by viewers
- One of Ay-O's best-known works, *Rainbow Environment No. 7: Tactile Rainbow Room + Rainbow Ames Box*, focuses not only on 'seeing' but also 'experiencing' as a physical sense. It takes the form of a shed made of rainbow-colored square panels with holes, where viewers can insert their fingers and enjoy different sensations.
- Ambitious new works over the age of 80
- New works made for this exhibition will be presented for the first time, demonstrating the artist's ceaseless ambition in tackling new forms of expression even into his eighties.
- A work for Hiroshima from more than twenty years ago
- The 1988 work *8:15 A.M.* is part of the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art's permanent collection. This was a commissioned piece made with the theme of 'Hiroshima'. What Ay-O expressed as what he could see from Hiroshima is not to be missed.

Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art

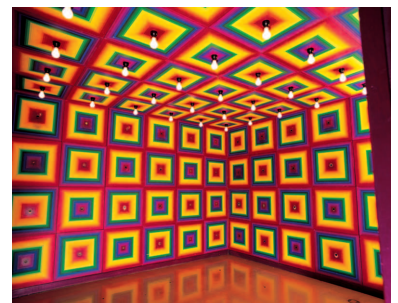
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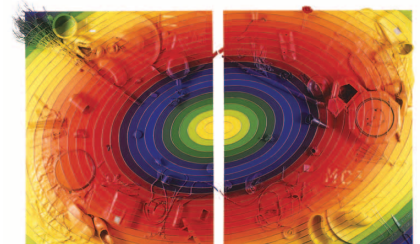
24 YES NO
2011



Ay-O Portrait
photo: Ichiro OTANI



Rainbow Environment No.7: Tactile Rainbow Room +Rainbow Ames's box
1969



8:15 A.M.
1988
Collection of Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art