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Resources, Scale, and Recognition in Japanese Contemporary Art: "Tokyo Pop" and the Struggle for a Page in Art History

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Outside of Japan, there remains only a limited knowledge of Japanese art of the 1990s and after. It was a period in which new contemporary art exploded in Tokyo with an intensity and originality—as well as national specificity—parallel to the much more famous Young British Artists movement in London.[1] The most well known version of what happened is encapsulated in the narration and documentation provided by Murakami Takashi in his hugely successful touring shows *Superflat* (2001) and *Little Boy* (2005). Yet these shows offered at best only a stylized reflection of the 1990s Tokyo scene, one that showcased the artist at its center.[2] The interest they generated and the global trajectory of Murakami's subsequent solo career have ensured that, in many regards, he can be taken as the most successful Japanese contemporary artist to have emerged in the early 1990s; that is, from a cohort born in the late 1950s or early 1960s, who came of professional age about the time of the burst of the Japanese economic "Bubble."[3] One indicator of his wide international impact is that the narration of this period is usually reduced to a page or two in English language art history textbooks and art guides, often exclusively focusing on Murakami and occasionally accompanied by Nara Yoshitomo or Mori Mariko.[4]

My aim is to contribute to the necessary broadening of discussion about a period to which international art historians of Japan will certainly soon turn. To do so, we must look again at Murakami's "Tokyo Pop" legacy and its origins in the 1990s and construct a more detailed narrative of Murakami's legacy in the context of an account not of his own making. At the very least, alongside Murakami (b.1962), the most minimally adequate story of the late 1980s and early 1990s needs to mention aspects of the work of the following artists: Ohtake Shinro (b.1955); Yanagi Yukinori (b.1959); Nara Yoshitomo (b.1959); Nakahara Kōdai (b.1961); Nakamura Masato (b.1963); Yanobe Kenji (b.1965); Aida Makoto (b.1965); Sone Yutaka (b.1965); and Ozawa Tsuyoshi (b.1965), together with other mebers of the art unit *Shōwa 40 nen kai* (i.e., The Group 1965, which includes Aida and Ozawa). I will also discuss the crucial role of the female curator Nishihara Min, who is Sone's partner and lives in Los Angeles. To make my story tractable, I narrow my discussion to those artists who have had a close relationship with Murakami. I focus particularly on the means by which these internationally lesser known artists have generated their own distinctive

material or symbolic resources and art organizational forms of practice, even when they are unable to match the breathtaking scale of Murakami's work, enabled by his global success.

To understand the artistic claims of Murakami's rivals, I approach the question principally as an ethnographer, not as an art historian. From 2007 to 2013, I was a participant-observer within the Japanese contemporary art scene as a foreign international art writer researching the peculiar and rather small art world mainly centered in Tokyo.[5] I combined art criticism with curatorial activities, wrote a widely-read blog (in English and sometimes in Japanese),[6] published articles in major English language art journals, and helped organize art events and exhibitions. Part of my activities consisted of conventional research: formal interviews and/or meetings with around 250 leading artists, writers, curators, and collectors, as well as numerous more informal conversations. I combined this wherever possible with more typical art historical sources. However, as an ethnographer, taken along to installations, openings, and after parties, I chose to privilege the informal and frank insider views of the art scene, articulated to me orally. Central to this were the alternative narratives of around a dozen important members of the Tokyo art scene—mainly curators and artists, all locals—with whom I spent extensive time. They were my guides and *entrée* to the inner workings of this world, offering opinions and local knowledge, which I carefully calibrated, triangulated, and recomposed as a narrative.[7] The interpretation I offer here, then, is a viewpoint that seeks to faithfully reflect a particular time and place: the "voice" of the Tokyo "tribe" looking back on the 1990s, as I see it; a corrective to the overwhelming dominance of Murakami's "voice" in the usual narrative.

As a sociologist, I also do not particularly privilege the views of artists about their own work: their position, their practice, and its significance is embedded in the broader local art system, a system in Japan that is notably out of sync with the global art system. The art system and its institutions—including not only the role of curators, gallerists, critics, and collectors, but also that of viewers, fans, art students, and so on—produces a meaning and visibility that sustain the value and reputation of an artist's work. My assumption about successful artists is not that they are necessarily competing for power and money, but that they *are* competing for historical recognition: for their "page" in the annals of art history, at home and, eventually, internationally.[8] Overwhelming commercial success, or the fashions of contemporary art theory—both of which are centered in the "Western" art world—may impose a narrowing of the discussion internationally about peripheral art scenes such as the one in Japan.[9] Here, in this essay, I hope to contribute to fresh debate on a period whose general appreciation internationally, at present, verges on caricature.

The "Tokyo Pop" Explosion and Its Legacies

The condition for the explosion of a distinctive "neo-pop" art in Tokyo in the early 1990s was youthful frustration that erupted amidst a peculiar transitional moment in Japanese history as the society moved from boom to bust. In 1990, contemporary art in Japan was dominated by Kansai artists, with Kyoto occupying the center of the art world.[10] At the time, however, Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku, the national Tokyo University of the Arts, known as Geidai, was seen as somnolent in its conservatism, with opportunities for showing or seeing "global" contemporary art in Tokyo minimal. *Kashi garo* (rental galleries) dominated the mainstream gallery scene—old fashioned galleries where artists could pay to show their work—and there was not yet a recognizable contemporary art market or gallery system. Meanwhile, while

glimpsing the "no future" around the corner, Japan plunged into a decadent moment after the burst of the real estate and stock exchange Bubble in late 1990, even as consumer excess and the new cultural trends of the late 1980s rolled on.[11]

Soaking up these heady times, but with very little opportunity to imagine a career in contemporary art, a group of students came together at Geidai, a remarkable network of figures who would go on to become leaders in the Tokyo art world, and big name artists of the next generation: among them were the artist and organizer Nakamura Masato, the curators Hasegawa Yūko and Kurosawa Shin, the gallerist Koyama Tomio, the curator and writer Nishihara Min, and (a little younger) two livewire artists just coming through the school, Ozawa Tsuyoshi and Aida Makoto.[12] The much younger writer, Kudō Kiki, who had failed to enter the art school, also hung out with them, as did the writer and conceptual artist, Nakazawa Hideki.[13] At the center of this network, was the brash, upstart artist Murakami Takashi; as legend would have it, the success-hungry son of a Saitama taxi driver.[14] Murakami was the consummate "connector," articulating and promoting the ideas fomenting in the group.[15] As Nishihara recalls, they were like a gang, spending all their time together: "talking, arguing, dreaming up ideas, checking out the scene, finding the best underground parties."[16] The emergence of what came to be called "Tokyo Pop" was the fruit of a social network at a particular time and place, of interactions between a group of talented and energetic individuals.

FIGURE 1

Murakami was particularly close to Nishihara, with whom he formed an intellectual alliance. They traveled together to *Documenta*, the exhibition of modern and contemporary art held every five years in Germany, writing critical reviews and planning an art magazine together. Nishihara, more or less dropped out of the Japanese art world after the 1990s: "too many young artists had disappointed me," she says.[17] Yet, she is often mentioned as a forgotten source of many of the basic ideas associated with the group.[18] Her writings are characterized as being totally different from the high brow, theory-soaked intellectualism of Sawaragi Noi—the other key art writer to emerge at this time and place—or Matsui Midori, a Princeton educated Ph.D. in literature, who appeared later through her advocacy of Nara and Murakami in the late 1990s. Rather, Nishihara's writings were "hardcore" in style: fast-moving, sharp, and throwaway, more like the style of writing nowadays seen in blogs.[19] She wrote as an art writer for the same journals as the former journalist, Hasegawa Yūko and Sawaragi, for the first time putting writing about contemporary art and artists into hip style and fashion magazines at the center of the Tokyo pop culture boom of the time.[20]

The art that got the group talking and which they sought to produce was a kind of "neo-pop," a label coined by influential *Bijutsu techō* (Art Notebook) editor Kusumi Kiyoshi and popularized by Sawaragi:[21] a reverential spin on American pop art that sought to mimic its immaculate, commercial aura by referencing the world of Japanese toys and consumer products.[22] Above all, there was huge admiration for the huge, empty, postmodern "simulationism" of Jeff Koons, who was everyone's hero.[23] Moreover, the young Japanese artists were also operating in the wake of the earlier breakthrough of others preceding their "neo-pop" style, notably Ohtake Shinro, Hibino Katsuhiko (b. 1958) and Tsubaki Noboru (b.1953). Hibino came out of a boom in competitive graphic design art, while Ohtake and Tsubaki received acclaim for making a kind of trashy Japanese pop art out of popular culture.[24] Close to Ohtake,

Yanagi Yukinori, a conceptual artist from the south, was on the verge of attracting huge international interest with his own cutting "neo-pop" style reflections on Japanese politics and national identity.[25]

A revival of interest in expressive painting also fed these trends.[26] This can be retrospectively linked to the breakthrough, from the mid 1990s, of Nara Yoshitomo, who was away in Europe and the United States at the time. Nara's early successes in the 1990s preceded Murakami, through both high-end gallery shows and lower brow illustrated books that had a kind of cult status among student and teenage consumers.[27] The two grew close as roommates during their time together as visiting professors at UCLA in 1998, maintaining a close alliance ever since.[28] Over the years, the two flagship artists of the Los Angeles gallery Blum and Poe made a point of attending each other's openings and discussing their respective plans. Both cultivated a determined distance and independence from the inner Tokyo art world. If anything, in Japan, Nara has been more famous as an artist than Murakami, and certainly the most popular contemporary artist in terms of museum shows or sales of commercial spin-off products.[29] After the disaster of 3.11, Nara became a political hero with his "anti-nukes" poster for the Tokyo demonstrations. With a successful commercial career at home and abroad, he had large resources and was able to plot huge shows that toured internationally – his *A to Z* shows, for example – taking his characters, his personalized "sheds" that look like children's dens, and his music obsession worldwide.[30] Nara's practice has often been underestimated because of its seemingly childish and superficial content. Yet its real power and originality, in contrast to Murakami's top down corporate operation, lay in the loose, decentered business organization he adopted for the production and distribution of commercial products, as well as the phenomenal internet fan base he often called on to help him realize his shows, in which Nara consumers are turned into Nara producers: for instance, the hundreds of homemade Nara toys sent in to his first solo retrospective at Yokohama in 2001, or the thousands of fans who showed up as volunteers to build his series of homecoming shows in Hirosaki, Aomori in the early 2000s.[31]

More directly, back in the 1990s, the young Tokyo artists faced intense competition from Kansai, with the biggest buzz concerning the sculptor Nakahara Kōdai (b.1961).[32] Nakahara was a serial conceptualist who famously abandoned exhibiting as an artist after 1995, instead becoming one of the most influential university professors of his generation in Kyoto. Already, by 1991, with his toy lego sculptures and *manga* style miniature girl figurines, he can be credited with two signature works of *otaku* style art, which Murakami, with his own sculptures, would later take to global fame.[33] Denying however, any identity as an *otaku* artist, these were just ideas from which Nakahara moved on, turning instead, for example, to work with children after the 1995 earthquake. He also established the basic *modus operandi* of the "innocent" boyish artist, which has also been the persona embodied by Nara over the years. Tragically, many of Nakahara's works were destroyed in a warehouse fire in 2010. Although he has remained a canonical figure throughout, only in 2013 was there a large exhibition of his re-made works, reassessing his influence.[34] Also from Kansai, Nakahara was joined by Yanobe Kenji, another *otaku* style Osaka artist, who was obsessed with the idea of apocalypse and making futuristic survival suits and machines.

FIGURE 2

A further problem for artists in Tokyo was acquiring space to show their work. In this struggle, the frustration and innovation of the young artists paralleled how the Young British Artists produced a new movement in London.[35] As with Damien Hirst's independently produced *Freeze* at an abandoned warehouse in 1988, the founding legend of "Tokyo Pop" was a show and party, in November 1992, at an obscure post-industrial site in south Tokyo. This was *Anomaly* at pioneer gallerist Ikeuchi Tsutomu's Röntgen Kunst Institut in Ōmori, Ōta-ku, co-organized by Sawaragi and Murakami.[36] Röntgen's next show was equally important: the two part *fo(u)rtunes* show in early 1993, curated by Nishihara Min, in which she introduced Aida and Ozawa. She would go on to introduce Sone at Röntgen, as well as presenting several important women artists including Fukuda Miran and Hanayo.

Without other spaces in which to exhibit, the artists took to the road. Heading the Geidai gang with Murakami was Nakamura Masato, whom he had met while teaching at a cram school in the 1980s. They sometimes worked together, and curiously shared the same birthday (Nakamura one year the junior).[37] The group had all traveled to Seoul to support the joint show "Nakamura to Murakami" in July 1982.[38] In December 1992, fresh from the excitement of *Anomaly*, they traveled west for an Osaka show of the same name, supplemented by a series of street performances: literally showing off—albeit as a bunch of Tokyo unknowns—to the Kansai art world.[39]

FIGURE 3

It was Nakamura, though, who found a solution to the problem of obtaining exhibition space, creating the next big landmark work: *The Ginburart* street interventions of April 1993.[40] Inspired by the New York East Village art movement, this was Nakamura's first signature work of art organization in which devising logistics in the face of the impossible barriers posed by everyday public life in Japan itself becomes a kind of work of art or practice. Nakamura, less well known internationally than other members of the "Tokyo Pop" group, is today perhaps the most powerful public art figure in Tokyo. He is the founding director of the 3331 Arts Chiyoda, a hugely ambitious art center housed in a former middle school, which sponsors community work in a declining Tokyo neighborhood and offers education in art careers.[41] Nakamura's art has always been devoted to social intervention: to effecting "change" through "burrowing inside existing institutions."[42] This was in distinction to Murakami's nihilism and largely revolutionary intent to replace the Japanese art world with his own form of art organization.[43] In the early 1990s, the two young artists vied for attention: Nakamura preceded Murakami in showing at SCAI The Bathhouse in 1994, the gallery owned by the influential dealer Shiraishi Masami, before Koyama Tomio (who was working for Shiraishi) took Murakami and Nara to found his own gallery.[44]

FIGURE 4

At *The Ginburart*, Nakamura instructed eight selected artists to each take a single *chōme* (sub-district) and make an "art terrorist" intervention as part of a jamboree of events in Ginza one Sunday. Ozawa Tsuyoshi was given the honor of Ginza's first sub-district, launching his *Nasubi* gallery series: a diminutive gallery in a traditional Japanese milk box, which was shown tied to a street post.[45] Again, this was a response to space constraints. Murakami's proposal to present his intervention in

Ozawa's gallery led eventually to a dispute over ownership of the original idea; Ozawa has gone on to show artists worldwide in his gallery.[46] Later in the year, a version of *The Ginburart* was taken to Fukuoka,[47] and a bigger follow up was planned for 1994 in Tokyo called *Shinjuku Shōnen Art*. Around this time, relations between the two friends, Murakami and Nakamura, soured. In 2010, there was a much-discussed reconciliation when Murakami filmed himself visiting the recently founded 3331. He went on record commenting that Nakamura had finally got himself an organization and company like his own.[48] But it was clear that Nakamura's organizations—including his earlier Command N, his involvement at Geidai in the Sustainable Art and Ueno Town projects, and the later TransArt projects—had long been a central part of the Tokyo scene, creating essential non-profit art spaces that are chronically lacking in Japan.[49] They also promoted a social art practice very different from the commercial goals of Murakami's organizations.

FIGURE 5

While Ozawa has, over the years, maintained a respectable international career, especially around Asia, with his social art collaborations and low-fi productions using everyday, vernacular materials (such as his *Vegetable Weapon* series), he has been sustained mainly by curatorial invitations.[50] Aida felt himself more directly challenged to compete in scale and conception with Murakami's international success: he has ruefully referred to Murakami as a fellow "marathon runner" who he sees up ahead somewhere in the distance.[51] He had financial resources, essentially, through patronage: his gallerist Mitsuma Sueo invested deeply in him, and a special relationship with the collector, Takahashi Ryūtaro, also ensured his work sits at the heart of the biggest domestic collection of important Japanese contemporary art of the 1990s and 2000s. On the other hand, many of Murakami and Nara's earlier works were sold abroad at cheaper prices, just as Japan lost its ukiyo-e masterpieces to Japoniste collectors in past eras.[52] Aida's fame within the Tokyo art world has been mostly evident as a kind of "word on the street" in art circles.[53] He was always a favorite of curators and critics, as well as with students: recent sensations Chim↑Pom and Endō Ichirō were Aida's students or assistants.[54] The proof lay in the intensity of his very specific but concentrated audience. While there was delight when a long awaited major retrospective at Mori Art Museum was announced by chief curator Kataoka Mami for late 2012, it led to a crisis of sorts, as it became clear that major corporations were reluctant to step forward to sponsor Aida's often politically—and pornographically—toxic art. Mitsuma instead turned to crowd sourcing—an internet call for fans and well-wishers to sponsor him—which, remarkably, worked: underwriting a huge show and catalogue that despite intimations of disaster turned out to be a surprise success.[55] The exhibition's frank cynicism about national popular culture and its shredding of post 3.11 political hypocrisies hit a nerve with visitors. It is not clear, though, whether the show helped Aida's international reputation.[56] Meanwhile, *Bijutsu techō* published a stiff conversation between Murakami and Aida, in which Murakami contrasted his career as a global artist against Aida's respected national status in *gendai bijutsu* (contemporary art in Japan).[57] Aida would sometimes underline this contrast in his refusal to communicate in English or his artistic mockery of mangled international translations of art theory.[58]

Looking back, as a sociologist might expect, there was no single "genius" in the emergent Japanese artistic field of the 1990s, but multiple creative figures—both artists and others—embedded in a wider field of creativity. Notably, the origin of

many of the key ideas of "Tokyo Pop" is unclear. Where history needs clarifying is in the bracketing of the initial explosion of "Tokyo Pop" by the years 1990 and 1995, before Murakami and Sawaragi appropriated the term. In 1996 and 1997, most of the "neo-pop" art—including some of Murakami's early work—was collected together in two widely discussed survey shows, *Tokyo Pop* at the Hiratsuka Museum, Kanagawa (1996) and *Art Scene 1990-1996* at Mito (1997), which encapsulated the movement and were direct precursors of *Superflat* and its manifesto.[59] These, and Ikeuchi's last show, *Bye Bye Ōta-ku*, closing down the old Röntgen at the end of 1995, summarized a phase in Japanese art that was now moving on to other things after the twin disasters of the Kobe earthquake and the Aum terrorist attack earlier that year.[60] At the time, Murakami was away on the prestigious PS1 Asian Cultural Council fellowship in New York, plotting his next moves.

Ikeuchi's ending of the first Röntgen effectively drew a line under *otaku* art as a decadent expression of the early 1990s. 1995 saw the birth of a very different social and community conscience in art that would see its expression in the voluntary non-profit style of organization (NPOs) that would emerge later: in Nara's practice involving volunteers; in Nakamura's organizational experiments in Tokyo; and eventually in the huge scale regional art projects of Kitagawa Fram in Echigo-Tsumari, as well as the Naoshima and Setouchi projects, funded by Fukutake Sōichiro.[61] In these, Yanagi Yukinori in particular would re-emerge as the architect of a new scale of regional art, after he turned away from the commercial art scene in New York to pursue his projects on the islands of Inujima and Momoshima.[62] At the same time, the disasters demanded a more serious reflection on post-war Japanese history. It was Aida's *War Pictures Returns* series of paintings (1995-97) that offered the clearest response. Indeed, at the close of the decade, with Japan in deep gloom, Sawaragi's exhibition *Ground Zero Japan* put Aida's work up front and central in a renarration of post-war Japanese art that moved from Okamoto Tarō via Ohtake, Yanobe, and Murakami's *Sea Breeze* from *Anomaly*, to Aida.[63] At the end of the decade *Bijutsu techō* put Aida on the cover as the artist of the 1990s, accompanied by a feature on Ohtake and Murakami's huge new investment during the late 1990s in large scale *otaku* toys and figurines.[64]

Murakami's Strategy

Murakami's strategy is well known. As his organizational form, he adopted and perfected the factory method with artist as CEO of his own production company, Kaikai Kiki: the globally isomorphic model of Koons, Hirst, Olafur Eliasson and many others that employs young artists to make the art. Murakami's corporation developed an unusually centralized organization, even including morning callisthenics led by the CEO himself.[65] The other global model—of outsourcing to craftsmen, as made famous by Ai Weiwei—was the model adopted by Sone Yutaka after he left Japan for Los Angeles. He developed a practice based on an extraordinary financial and social investment with craftsmen working with marble and weaving in a poor Chinese and Mexican village respectively.[66]

The brilliance of Murakami's production line lay in the timing, as it did for Nara with his book illustrations, t-shirts, and collectibles. Both went global at about the time of "Web 2:0", around 2000, when internet capacity to transmit flat, digital images suddenly expanded.[67] Superflat and Nara's characters looked just as good on a screen or in a magazine: infinitely reproducible images, referencing their homeland while somehow also being "without national origin" (*mukokuseki*); that is, masking the smell of nationalism with "odorless" fantasies of an imaginary Japan, as do Hello

Kitty or Pokemon.[68] In America, Superflat's sly commercial adoption of self-Orientalization was discussed frankly by Murakami in terms of his "theory of art entrepreneurship."[69] Moreover, borrowing from fashions in curation, framing art from emerging countries as a reflection of social change and economic development, Murakami stuffed the catalogues (particularly *Little Boy*) with sociological material. Ironic or not, his art dovetailed with the developing Japanese government sponsored rebranding of "Cool Japan" in terms of its anime, manga, and hi-tech industries. Murakami and Nara were feted as ambassadors, and at that time were willingly signed up to the cause.[70]

Super Flat was first put on in Tokyo as a lightweight populist counterpoint to Sawaragi's heavy and sombre *Ground Zero Japan*, in early 2000 at the Parco Museum, a small exhibition venue in a Shibuya shopping mall. It was imported with great enthusiasm to the United States in early 2001 by Los Angeles MOCA curator Paul Schimmel and gallerists Blum and Poe. The title was streamlined to *Superflat* and the show reframed as an essential guide to the best of Japanese contemporary art. The exhibition duly became a sensation.[71] The success in Los Angeles prefigured even bigger shows in Paris (2002) and the massive New York triumph at the Japan Society (2005), coordinated by Alexandra Munroe, just as the whole world seemed to be discovering salmon sushi, warm sake, and Bill Murray in *Lost in Translation*.[72]

FIGURE 6

Superflat and *Little Boy* can be read as beautifully produced catalogues with an Orwellian mission to control the future by rewriting the past (Murakami cites Orwell as a favorite author).[73] In the writing of the Superflat movement, Murakami's peers and rivals were dropped, one after the other, by the wayside. Ohtake and Yanagi were almost never mentioned, although Tsubaki was. Aida was airbrushed into a marginal place. Nara's work was effectively trivialized as graphic art alongside hip design units Enlightenment, Chappies, and other superficially similar "cute" imagery; Nakahara was sidelined, although Yanobe was brought along for the ride; Sone and Nishihara were invisible, and there was certainly no place for old friends Ozawa or Nakamura. In their place, Murakami selected designers, "girly" photographers and a selection of highly marketable "cute" young girl artists, selected out of nowhere design and art schools—Murakami's "Tokyo Girls Bravo."[74] It worked: several bestselling guides in English to Japanese contemporary art were published that based their selection entirely on Kaikai Kiki artists.[75] After *Superflat*, with the English language fluency of Matsui Midori ascendent over Sawaragi's scarce writings in English, Matsui was able to effect a shift in the international perception of Murakami and the Superflat movement from "boy's stuff" about war and *otaku* obsessions, to "girl's" themes of *kawaii*, thus cementing the peculiar and often salacious impression of the contemporary visual arts in Japan as dominated by representations of and by young girls.[76]

On the face of it, Murakami's international success seemed to be a perfect case of *gaisen kōen,* enabling a twofold "triumphant return performance" in the 2000s to the Japanese art world: in terms of his globally famed reputation, and his sheer resources as an artist. No other artist from his peer group, then or now, could have imagined an operation on this scale. It is not clear, however, whether the familiar pattern of using international recognition to cement a historical place in the canon at home—as might be told in the case of Okamoto Tarō, Foujita Tsuguhara, Yoko Ono,

Kusama Yayoi or, even the more recent examples of Sugimoto Hiroshi or Kawamata Tadashi—has worked quite as planned in the case of Murakami.

Indeed, Murakami may have felt insecure about his reputation in Japan, due in part to the awkward position in which he found himself *vis à vis* his old rivals—big success breeds resentment. Murakami has enjoyed styling himself as an outsider; he has always engaged with criticism on the internet, defiantly firing back barrages of tweets and opinions. He has, of course, not really been an outsider given his fame and media ubiquity. Although there have been production sites in New York and Los Angeles, he was always essentially based out of Saitama. The point about Murakami's vulnerability comes from a surprising source: Paul Schimmel, the curator who has done the most to make Murakami world famous, and will readily assert his evaluation of Murakami over Nara, Aida, and others. Schimmel commented that despite all of Murakami's international success what has concerned Murakami most is his place in Japanese *national* art history.[77] Indeed, as far back as 2001 and the founding of GEISAI—Murakami's alternative "art school," an open art competition to discover new talent—Murakami devoted a considerable part of his time and resources to fighting the "art struggle" for better recognition at home.[78] After the peak of the global art bubble in 2008, he continued with increasing determination.

With no representation in Japan, Murakami opened his own independent Kaikai Kiki gallery in Tokyo. When the gallery showed at Art Fair Tokyo, it sat pointedly apart from the other contemporary galleries, buying itself a bigger space. There has been talk about a private museum to make up for the lack of major shows by Murakami in Japan since 2001—following the lead of his hero Okamoto Tarō—although Mori Art Museum finally negotiated a big show for late 2015. Murakami's Kaikai Kiki also appeared to become a significant financial source for the ailing *Bijutsu techō*, by regularly advertising its events in sponsored pages in which Murakami presented ever younger rosters of new artists in an *otaku* style.[79] In 2012, the journal even co-published with Kaikai Kiki an 816-page book to archive all of Murakami's appearance in the journal (Nara's own huge volume followed in 2014).

GEISAI, meanwhile, took an increasing role in Murakami's practice. By 2008, at the height of Murakami's commercial success, this enormous one-day competitive festival of amateur art, which usually takes place at the massive Tokyo Big Site in Odaiba, had expanded into a twice a year show, with 2000 hopeful participants.[80] Accompanying national and international star judges and Murakami's personal appearance, in which he screamed enthusiasm for participants at the opening of the fair, J-pop stars performed on a stage that reputedly cost one million dollars to install, while upstairs visitors could enjoy an Akihabara-style maid (hostess) café and fake school playground. Over-reach and cash flow problems that year led to a cut-price GEISAI the following year—where donations were solicited—before it rebounded to expand to new international destinations in Taipei and Miami in successive years.

Controversy has swirled around GEISAI's relationship to the mainstream Tokyo art world. Sawaragi and others have defended it as an alternate institution that succeeded in discovering real talent; with his partner Yamamoto Yūko, Sawaragi picked off some of the better artists for the gallery Yamamoto Gendai.[81] Others in Tokyo would speak with guarded hostility about GEISAI and how it deliberately subverted the workings of the conventional system, in which artists slowly build reputation and value through gallery and museum shows and critical recognition; at GEISAI, Murakami hired other self-made guru creatives (*kurieitā*) to lecture young fee-paying hopefuls on how to be successful art stars without art school or a traditional education. Leading artists in the younger generation would express interest

in Murakami's organizational forms and business strategies, but there has been a complete lack of interest in his pop culture basis, particularly its now outdated obsession with anime and manga.[82] What is clear, however, is that GEISAI introduced a real bias into the international understanding about what was happening in the Japanese art scene: first-time contemporary art spotters, as well as veteran art journalists, were hoaxed into talking about GEISAI as the cutting edge of Japanese art.[83] The truth was more prosaic. GEISAI copied its organizational form from the larger, and similar, Design Festa—a twice yearly open festival for young amateur designers and artists—but transformed that organization's open-entry "punk rock" ethos into a brash "reality TV" style talent competition, in which the winner was awarded a job with Kaikai Kiki. GEISAI was a typical "pay-per-play" culture event, with costs for a one day show and perhaps a fifteen second visit to the booth from the jury, potentially as expensive as renting some *kashi garo*.[84] Selected runners-up might include some conceptual choices, but the winner was invariably a "cute" female artist likely to find herself painting flowers by numbers at corporate headquarters. Murakami drew on the same youthful masses of *kurieitā* hopefuls, who provided the volunteers for Nara's shows, Nakamura's school, or the *kohebi* (little snakes) for , Kitagawa's festivals. Murakami's "school," though, was driven by the cult of fame. It was an alternate mode of generating art power from the country's "creative surplus": that is, the rather poignant over-production of ever-hopeful, struggling young art and design students in Japan.[85]

A Final Word

How will art historians outside Japan eventually renarrate the 1990s scene and after? After *Little Boy*, Murakami embarked on a series of spectacular solo shows that received both acclaim and growing scepticism abroad.[86] Meanwhile, the critical reception of one or two major survey shows has been mixed. A huge platform was given to Murakami at the Tate Modern, London, in 2009, when he bookended the enormous post-Warhol survey, *Pop Life*.[87] The show was criticized for its tactless timing, celebrating the material obsessions of the global art bubble era of the early 2000s just after the world financial crisis and economic downturn in late 2008. The artists refused the new name "Sold Out," when the curators attempted to dodge criticism by renaming the show.[88] The final room displayed a cartoon mural of Akihabara with a monster manga girl by Murakami and his righthand man at the corporation, Mr.; a video of Hollywood actress Kirstin Dunst and Murakami in cosplay; and a documentary portraying GEISAI as the future of Japanese contemporary art. The catalogue meanwhile portrayed Murakami as the wizard of post-Koons postmodern irony, surfing on the waves of global cultural diffusion and (mis)translation. Even here, a solid commercial logic was at work behind the smart art theory: the co-editor and author of the article, Alison Gingeras, also worked as the curatorial manager of the Pinault collection, which had paid out fifteen million dollars for Murakami's *My Lonesome Cowboy* the year before, in 2008.[89] On the other hand, there was a fairly clear revisionist message in former Mori Art Museum director David Elliott's *Bye Bye Kitty!!!* at Japan Society in 2011.[90] This show drew a line under "Cool Japan" and, implicitly, the legacy of *Little Boy* that was mounted in the same venue in 2005. Instead, it returned Aida (along with Yanagi Miwa) to center stage, in a gloomier vision of post-Bubble Japan, filled with dark forebodings of urban and environmental disaster. *Bye Bye Kitty!!!* resonated in New York because of the timing of its opening, just after the 2011 disaster. Still, it received nothing like the sensational attention or visitor numbers of its *Little Boy* predecessor.[91]

Post 3.11, Murakami appears to have sought reconciliation with the art world he had left behind: staging public discussions with Nakamura, Aida, Nakahara, and others.[92] He also openly repudiated the government's "Cool Japan" policies, while defensively denying rumors that he had been recruited to brand the upcoming Tokyo Olympics.[93] There has been an obvious zeitgeist shift since the disasters, though, which does not bode well for the core of Murakami's work: nearly all art in Japan since 3.11 has focused soberly on rethinking what is wrong with Japan or seeking new forms of social and community art.[94] Historically, though, Murakami's name on a page of art history seems assured: as an artist whose work resonated perfectly with the financial exuberance and queasy hedonism of a more naive era of globalization, which is now over.[95]

FIGURE 1

Performance of *Ōsaka mikisā keikaku* (Osaka Mixer Plan) by Small Village Centre, with friends, Osaka, December 1992, in front of the Hankyū department store. From left, standing, in white coats, Nakazawa Hideki, Murakami Takashi, Ikemiya Nakao (performance artist), Nishihara Min. Seated center, Ozawa Tsuyoshi, and right, Ikeuchi Tsutomu. According to Nakazawa, the idea for the plan originated with Murakami. Nakamura declined to wear a white coat, although he may have been the photographer. Used with permission of Nishihara Min, personal collection.

FIGURE 2

Aida Makoto, *Kyodai Fuji tai'in VS kingu gidora* (The Giant Member Fuji versus King Gidora) (1993). Acetate film, acrylic, eyelets, 310 x 410cm. Photo by Hideto Nagatsuka. © Aida Makoto. Aida's sensational first public work, introduced by Nishihara Min at *fo(u)rtunes*. Used with permission of Mizuma Art Gallery and Aida Makoto.

FIGURE 3

Ujino Muneteru performing an *Art Mikoshi* exhibition tour of the Ginza interventions at *The Ginburart* (1993). Used with permission of Nakazawa Hideki, who published it in the floppydisk journal *Japan Art Today* he co-edited. Edition 5 featured *The Ginburart*.

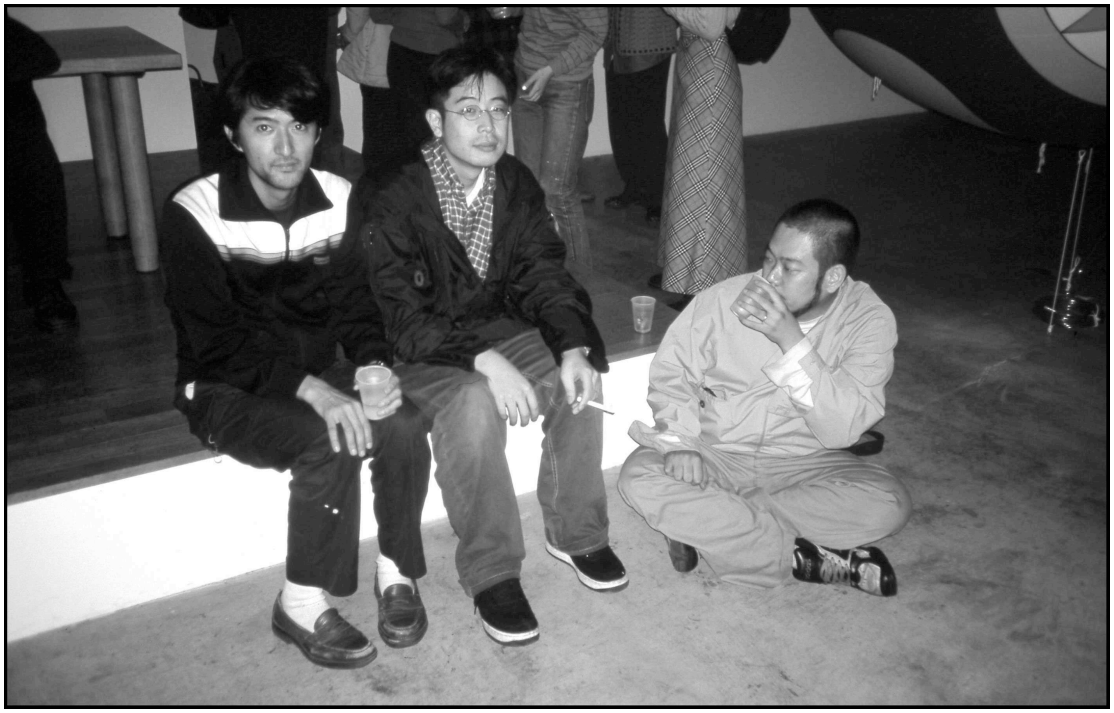
FIGURE 4

Nakamura Masato, *TRAUMATRAUMA* (1997). Installation view at SCAI The Bathhouse of the four most iconic Japanese *combini* corporation lights from any Asian city, negotiated for by Nakamura and then neutralized in the white cube. Used with permission of Nakamura Masato.

FIGURE 5

Ozawa Tsuyoshi demonstrating back pack installation of *Nasubi Gallery*, in this case the exhibition *Top Breeder Series Vol.2* (1994) by Complesso Plastico (art unit of Matsukage Hiroyuki and Jirano Hiro). Used with permission from Peter Bellars, personal collection.

FIGURE 5



Young members-to-be of *Showa 40 nen kai* at SCAI The Bathhouse, taken June 1994 at the opening of Murakami's *Fall in Love* solo show. From left, artists Aida Makoto, Ozawa Tsuyoshi, Kinoshita Parco. Used with permission from Peter Bellars.

[1] Matsui Midori, "Conversation Days: New Japanese Art between 1991 and 1995," in Howard Singerman, ed., *Public Offerings*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001), 247-30; Nakazawa Hideki, *Art History: Japan 1945-2014*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Aloalo, 2014), 81-110.

[2] Murakami Takashi, *Superflat*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001); *Little Boy: The Art of Japan's Exploding Sub Cultures* (New York: Japan Society/Yale University Press, 2005).

[3] Any measurement is contestable, but by both standards —"market success" and "discursive attention"—suggested by Malcolm Bull in "The Two Economies of World Art" (Jonathan Harris, ed. *Globalization and Contemporary Art* [Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011], 179-90), this view is sustained. For example, in *Artprice* records of secondary auction sales from 2007 to 2010 he was ranked no. 10 in the world, with Nara Yoshitomo at no. 26, by far the two highest Japanese artists (in more recent years, Nara has outsold Murakami); whilst, in terms of English language online citations, publications about his work, and international shows (the second "economy"), Murakami is way ahead, with Nara and Mori Mariko having substantial attention, Aida Makoto also well placed (in terms of discourse, but not shows), declining visibility for Yanagi Yukinori, and much less for Nakamura Masato, or Nakahara Kōdai.

[4] For example, the page Murakami gets in Hal Foster, et al., *Art Since 1900* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011), 736-37. He is the *only* contemporary Japanese artist after the 1960s discussed in this 800 page canonical guide. Another popular guide, Uta Grosenick and Burkhard Riemschneider, eds., *Art Now: 81 Artists at the Rise of the New Millenium* (Köln: Taschen, 2002) gives space to three Japanese: Mori, Murakami, and Nara. In later editions, Mori and Nara were dropped.

[5] Compare Sarah Thornton, *Seven Days in the Art World* (London: Granta, 2008). My research was supported by a 2006-7 Japan Foundation-SSRC Abe Fellowship.

[6] My blog is archived at: www.art-it.asia/u/rhqiun/4sSyJd5MBKF3c8E2iGXP.

[7] The full narrative can be found in Adrian Favell, *Before and After Superflat: A Short History of Japanese Contemporary Art 1990-2011* (Hong Kong: Blue Kingfisher/DAP, 2012).

[8] Combining Pierre Bourdieu, i.e., *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) with Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1982).

[9] See Ming Tiampo, "Cultural Mercantilism: Modernism's Means of Production," in Harris, *Globalization and Contemporary Art*, 212-24; also Reiko Tomii, "Historicizing 'Contemporary Art': Some Discursive Practices in *Gendai Bijutsu* in Japan," *positions* 12.3 (2004), 611-41.

[10] Nakazawa, *Art History: Japan 1945-2014*, 82-83. Already well recognized internationally in this respect is the importance of Morimura Yasumasa (b. 1951) and performance group Dumb Type.

[11] The phrase "no future" is used by many of the protagonists to describe their feelings in that period. See especially Kudō Kiki, *Post No Future* (Japan: Kawade Shobō, 2008).

[12] Matsui, "Conversation Days: New Japanese Art between 1991 and 1995," 246-42.

[13] Interviews with Kudō Kiki (2009); Nakazawa Hideki (2010).

[14] "Takashi's Chronicle since 1962," *Geijutsu shinchō* (Arts New Wave) (May 2012), 44-49.

[15] See Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point* (New York: Little-Brown, 2002).

[16] Interview with Nishihara Min (2009).

[17] Ibid.

[18] Kudō, interview (2009); interviews with Endo Mizuki (2010); Tanaka Koki (2010). Paul Schimmel refered to her as "Murakami's muse," interview (2009).

[19] Kudō, interview (2010).

[20] Matsui, "Conversation Days: New Japanese Art between 1991 and 1995," 244-42; Azby Brown, "The Great Art Hoax," *Tokyo Journal* (Sept. 1993): 26-33. Sawaragi was a junior editor at *Bijutsu techō* (Art Notebook), the leading popular journal of contemporary art published in Tokyo.

[21] Interview with Kawade Eri, *Bijutsu techō* editor (2007). See Sawaragi Noi, *Bijutsu ni nani ga okotta ka 1992-2006* (What Happened to Art 1992-2006) (Tokyo: Kokusho, 2006).

[22] Dana Friis Hansen, "Empire of Goods," *Flash Art* 15 (1992): 78-81.

[23] Nishihara, interview (2009).

[24] Nakazawa, *Art History: Japan 1945-2014*, 71-76.

[25] Alexandra Munroe, "Wandering Position," *Flash Art* 25 (1992): 71-74.

[26] Evoked in *Garden of Painting: Japanese Art of the 00s*, exh. cat. (Osaka: National Museum of Art, 2010).

[27] Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 56-63.

[28] Nara Yoshitomo, *The Little Star Dweller* (Tokyo: Rockin' On, 2004), 81-89.

[29] Interview with Amano Tarō (2007); on Nara's populism, see Matsui Midori, "A to Z: Yoshii Brewery Brickhouse," *Art Forum* (Dec. 2006): 327-28.

[30] Miwako Tezuka, "Music on My Mind: The Art and Phenomenon of Yoshitomo Nara," in *Nobody's Fool*, eds. Melissa Chiu and Miwako Tezuka (New York: Asia Society/Abrams 2011), 89-109; interview with Miwako Tezuka (2009).

[31] Interviews with Hatakeyama Hidefumi, the manager of Nara's NPO Harappa, Hirosaki (2008), and his business partner in L.A., Kawasaki Yoshi (2007).

[32] Munroe, "Wandering Position."

[33] In a famous discussion between the young rivals Nakahara, Murakami, and Yanobe, published as "Post-Hobby Art Japan," *Bijutsu techō* (Art Notebook), vol. 44, no. 651 (1992): 68-81, Murakami in fact criticized the "*otaku*" style of the two Kansai artists.

[34] Nakahara Kōdai, "Migration or Retrospective," exh. cat. (Okayama: Prefectural Museum of Art, 2013).

[35] Julian Stallabrass, *Hi Art-Lite* (London: Verso, 2006).

[36] Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 91-94. See also Matsui, "Conversation Days: New Japanese Art between 1991 and 1995," 241–37. Interview with Ikeuchi Tsutomu (2007).

[37] Kudō, interview (2010).

[38] Nakazawa, *Art History: Japan 1945-2014*, 88-89.

[39] Nakazawa, interview (2010); Yoshitake Mika, "The Meaning of the Nonsense of Excess," in Paul Schimmel, ed., © *Murakami,* exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007), 118-20.

[40] Roughly translated as "Ginza Art Stroll."

[41] Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 210–20.

[42] Nakamura Masato, interview (2010).

[43] Nakazawa, interview (2010). Murakami describes his intended revolution in the historical catalogue *The GEISAI* (Tokyo: Kaikai Kiki, 2005), 7.

[44] Interviews with Shiraishi Masami (2007); Koyama Tomio (2007).

[45] Nakazawa, "Before It's All Forgotten!" in Ozawa Tsuyoshi, *Answer With Yes and No*, exh.cat. (Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, 2004), 54.

[46] Kamiya Yukie, interview (2007); Ozawa Tsuyoshi, *The Invisible Runner Strides On*, exh.cat. (Hiroshima: City Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009).

[47] The Museum City project. Interviews with Yamano Shingo (2012); Kuroda Raiji (2013).

[48] In his video blog "takashipom" (03/26/10).

[49] Interviews with Roger McDonald (2007); Hoshina Toyomi (2012).

[50] Live interview/talk show with Ozawa Tsuyoshi, Japan Foundation, London (2011), and back stage access to installation week for Shōwa 40 nen kai, *We are Boys!*, Düsseldorf Kunsthalle, exh.cat. (Düsseldorf: Silvana Editoriale, 2011).

[51] Aida Makoto, interview with Andrey Bold and Izuhara Chisako (13 May 2012): http://www.gadabout.jp/interview-makoto-aida

[52] Uchida Mayumi and Kojima Yayoi, eds., *Neoteny: The Takahashi Collection*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: BSS, 2008), at Tokyo Ueno Mori Museum and touring countrywide.

[53] Interviews with Aida associates Abe Kenichi (2007); Aoyama Hideki (2010); Tamura (2013).

[54] See Gabriel Ritter, *Tokyo Nonsense*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Scion Gallery, 2008).

[55] Aida Makoto, *Tensai de gome nasai* / *Monument For Nothing*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, 2012); Edan Corkill, "Disaster Looms Large for Artist 'Genius' Aida Makoto," *Japan Times* (16 Nov. 2012). Documentation of the crowd sourcing call—the *Heisei kanjin* (temple solicitation) project—can be found at http://www.mori.art.museum/english/contents/aidamakoto

[56] Adrian Favell, "Aida Makoto: sekai wa naze Aida Makoto ni kanshin o muke nai no ka?" (Aida Makoto: The World Won't Listen?), *Bijutsu techō* (Art Notebook), vol. 65, no. 977 (Jan. 2013): 84-87.

[57] I.e., the canon of contemporary art, as understood from a Japanese point of view. "Special Talk: Takashi Murakami x Makoto Aida," *Bijutsu techō* (Art Notebook), vol. 65, no. 977 (Jan. 2013): 60-69. Murakami's backhanded complement may be referencing Sawaragi's famous thesis that the Japanese avant-garde *gendai bijutsu* (contemporary art) and its "deviation" in the 1960s and 70s described by critic Chiba Shigeo, was an empty legacy—the "bad place" with which "Tokyo Pop" artists had to break. Sawaragi Noi, *Nihon, gendai, bijutsu* (Japan, Contemporary, Art) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1998).

[58] For example, the Japanese-English dictionary he left for puzzled foreigners at the Yokohama Triennale in 2001: Aida Makoto, *Monument For Nothing* (Tokyo: Graphicsha, 2007), 142. On Aida, I am grateful to numerous conversations with artist and art writer, Mario A.

[59] *Tokyo Pop: atarashi bijutsu no imēji* (Tokyo Pop: A New Image of Art) featured among others, Murakami, Mori, Aida, and Nara. Nakazawa, in his *Art History: Japan 1945-2014*, also discusses 1990-95 as the definitive era of "Tokyo Pop." Yet in "The Superflat Trilogy" (*Little Boy*, 150-61,

Murakami claims his 1999 manifesto—"Hello, You Are Alive: Tokyo Pop Manifesto," *Kōkoku hihyō* (Advertisement Criticism), no. 226 (April 1999): 58-59—was the foundational use of the term inspiring his selection for *Super Flat* at Parco. He was supported by Sawaragi (*Kōkoku hihyō*) and Matsui, i.e., "Toward a Definition of Tokyo Pop," in Murakami, *The Meaning of the Nonsense of the Meaning*, exh.cat. (New York: Bard College/Abrams, 1999), 20-29.

[60] I am grateful for numerous discussions in Tokyo with artist Peter Bellars, who covered these events for *Asahi Evening News*. He is a close associate of Nakamura Masato.

[61] Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 174-83. Kitagawa Fram, interview (2009).

[62] Yanagi Yukinori, *Inujima Note* (Tokyo: Miyake Fine Art, 2010). Interviews with Miyake Shinichi (2011); Yanagi Yukinori (2011), and field visits to Inujima and Momoshima. Kataoka Mami's selection and text about Yanagi for Roppongi Crossing, *Out of Doubt*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Mori Art Museum, 2013), 62-67, re-affirmed the monumentality of these "lifework" projects.

[63] Sawaragi Noi, *Ground Zero Japan*, exh.cat. (Mito: Art Tower Mito, 1999).

[64] Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 113-21; *Bijutsu techō* (Art Notebook), vol. 51 no. 780 (Dec. 1999), 11-29. Murakami is featured, 41-50. Between them there is a feature on Ohtake Shinro.

[65] Arthur Lubow, "The Murakami Method," *New York Times* (3 April 2005). See also Thornton, "The Studio Visit," in *Seven Days in the Art World*, 183-217.

[66] Nishihara Min, "From Here to There," in Sone Yutaka, *Travel to River Island*, exh. cat. (Toyota: Municipal Museum of Art, 2002), 4-90; Endō Mizuki, "Marble Sculpture as Art Project: Yutaka Sone's Practices and Mediums under Postmodernism," in Sone Yutaka, *Perfect Moment*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Opera City Gallery, 2011), 22-99.

[67] Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 63-69.

[68] Iwabuchi Koichi, *Recentering Globalization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

[69] Murakami Takashi, *Geijutsu kigyō ron* (The Art Entrepreneurship Theory) (Tokyo: Gentosha, 2005). Discussed in Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 49-56.

[70] For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs brochure, *Creative Japan* (2007) which featured both artists on one page selected by self-styled Japanese "art cheerleader," Yamaguchi Yumi: http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/en/creativejapan

[71] Interviews with Tim Blum (2007); Jeff Poe (2007).

[72] The reference to exported Japanese contemporary art as "salmon sushi" comes from Kataoka Mami, interview (2009); I also discussed *Little Boy*'s problematic legacy with former Japan Society director Joe Earle (2011). See also Adrian Favell, "Bye Bye Little Boy," *Art in America* (March 2011): 86-91.

[73] Murakami, *Little Boy*, 100.

[74] Murakami Takashi (cur.), *Tokyo Girls Bravo*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: Kaikai Kiki, 2002).

[75] For example, Margrit Brehm, *The Japanese Experience* (Frankfurt: Hatje Kantz, 2002); Ivan Vartanian, *Drop Dead Cute* (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle, 2005); Ian Luna et al., *Tokyo Life* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007). This style of work also dominates two widely available bilingual guides: Yamaguchi Yumi, *Warriors of Art* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2007); Matsui Midori, *The Age of Micropop* (Tokyo: Parco, 2007).

[76] Matsui, "Beyond the Pleasure Room to the Chaotic Street," in Murakami, *Little Boy*, 208-39. See also Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 31-41; On the "age of the girl," see Sharon Kinsella, *Schoolgirls, Money and Rebellion in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2014), 1-24.

[77] Schimmel, interview (2009).

[78] In his second self-help book, Murakami Takashi, *Geijutsu tōsō ron* (Art Theory Struggle) (Tokyo: Gentōsha, 2001), Murakami explicitly portrays the competition for art historical recognition in these macho terms.

[79] For example, Chaos Lounge in 2010; Sawaragi Noi, "Budding Freedom/Equality and Their Future": http://www.art-it.asia/u/admin_columns/4a3tyG6ZDlvUeCumTRbQ

[80] I was an accredited press visitor to GEISAI #11, the biggest GEISAI of all, in September 2008. The comment about the $1 million screen comes from Schimmel, interview (2009).

[81] Sawaragi Noi, "Reflections on 2009 and the First Decade of the 21st Century," *ART-iT*: http://www.art-it.asia/u/admin_columns/KGFt0SIjbf6VJcrDXkZM

[82] Inteviews with "zero zero generation" artists, Nawa Kōhei (2007); Kito Kengo (2007); Tanaka Kōki, (2010); see Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 191-96.

[83] For example, Dan Fox, "Tokyo: City Report," *Frieze* 104 (Jan.-Feb. 2007); or Philip Segalot, awarding prizes at GEISAI #11.

[84] On average at recent versions, a tiny booth with walls might cost about $800, and a tiny 1.8 x 1.2 meter blank space about $200 for the day; bigger spaces, chairs, passes for parents to help with unloading, or access to an electricity power point all cost considerably extra. The phrase "pay-per-play" comes from blogger W. David Marx.

[85] Favell, *Before and After Superflat*, 69-77.

[86] © *Murakami* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007) and touring; Murakami Takashi, *Murakami Versailles* (Paris: Xavier Barral, 2010); Murakami Takashi, *Murakami-Ego*, exh.cat. (Doha: Qatar Museum Authority/Rizzoli, 2012).

[87] Jack Bankowsky, Alison Gingeras, Catherine Woods. eds., *Pop Life: Art in a Material World*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Modern, 2009), and touring.

[88] Adrian Searle, "Pop Life's Schlock Horrors," *The Guardian* (29 Sept. 2009).

[89] Alison Gingeras, "Lost in Translation," in *Pop Life*, 76-91.

[90] David Elliott, *Bye Bye Kitty!!! Heaven and Hell in Contemporary Japanese Art* (New York: Yale University Press, 2011).

[91] Live interview/talk show with David Elliott, Japan Foundation/Chelsea College of Art, London (2011).

[92] I refer to the public reconciliations with Nakamura and Aida above. After Nakahara's return to visibility with his Okayama show, a re-run of the famous 1992 debate with Murakami and Yanobe was staged at the National Art Center Tokyo in early 2014. Reportedly, Yanobe and Nakahara sat glumly while Murakami did all the talking, leading to a heated argument with host Kusumi.

[93] Daryl Wee, "An Exasperated Takashi Murakami replies to 2020 Olympics Design Rumors," *Blouin ArtInfo* (12 Sept. 2013). Murakami comments: "So all the anger and annoyance calling for me not to be involved in the Olympics, has been yet another painful reminder of my own position and status in Japan."

[94] For example, *Out of Doubt*; Takehisa Yuu (cur.), *Artists and the Disaster: Documentation in Progress*, exh. cat. (Mito: Art Tower Mito, 2012).

[95] Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).