



## AWAZU Kiyoshi WHAT CAN DESIGN DO

2019. 5.18 (Sat) -  
9.23 (Mon-hol)

Exhibition Title	AWAZU Kiyoshi WHAT CAN DESIGN DO
Period	Saturday, May 18 -Monday, September 23, 2019
Hours	10:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays) *Ticket sales end 30 minutes before closing time
Venue	Galleries 1-6, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa
Closed	Mondays (Open on July 15, August 12, September 16 and 23), July 16[Tue] and Sep 17[Tue]
No. of works	353
Admission	General: ¥1,200(¥1,000) College students: ¥800(¥600) Elem/JH/HS: ¥400(¥300) 65 and older: ¥1,000 *Prices in brackets are for groups of 20 or more and advance tickets Combi tickets1 : "Oiwa Oscar - Journey to the Light" (5.18-8.25) Combi tickets2 : "Where We Now Stand - In Order to Map the Future [1]" (9.14-9.23) General: ¥2,000(¥1,600) College students: ¥1,400(¥1,100) Elem/JH/HS: ¥700(¥600) 65 and older: ¥1,600
Advance Tickets	Ticket PIA (Tel 0570-02-9999) P code: [this exhibition] 769-552 [Combi ticket 1] 769-548 [Combi ticket 2] 769-693 / Lawson Ticket (Tel 0570-000-777) L code: [this exhibition] 55367 [Combi ticket 1] 55342 [Combi ticket 2] 54417 EVENTIFY (Family Mart Group) *available at the Fami Port counter at Family Mart stores
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)
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In cooperation with	Tsuyama City / TOPPAN PRINTING CO., LTD., Printing Museum, Tokyo / Pictorico
Supervision about Minjung Art prints	FURUKAWA Mika, YANG Seol
Planning supervision	AWAZU Ken
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**About  
the Exhibition**

Since 2006, 2939 works and materials in the artist's collection have been gifted to this museum and carefully researched. In 2007, the museum presented "Graphism in the Wilderness: Kiyoshi Awazu," exhibiting 1,750 of the gifted works along workshops, performances, and valuable testimonies from creators having past involvement in Awazu's activities. Based on its ongoing research of the Awazu collection, the museum from 2014 to '18 hosted a five-part series, "Awazu Kiyoshi: Makurihirogeru," exploring facets of Awazu's world under specific themes such as performance, architecture and photography. Now in 2019—a decade after Awazu Kiyoshi's passing—we are presenting an ambitious Awazu Kiyoshi retrospective, representing the culmination of this museum's years of research. Inviting his son, AWAZU Ken, in the role of exhibition supervisor, we will clearly reveal the essence of Awazu's design from the perspective of his undying interest in ordinary people and his primary motivation—"Designing society." Such is an important perspective for us as well, as people entrusted with creating the society of tomorrow. Taking this opportunity, furthermore, the museum will formally open its entire Awazu Kiyoshi archives database to public access and begin making some works available as open data. Through *non-hierarchical image reproduction*, a condition Awazu viewed as a "popular icon" of creative freedom, we will carry on the artist's spirit.

**Exhibition  
Features****A stance of designing society**

Even as Japan's design world matured, Awazu remained an advocate of social causes, firm in his stance of seeking "how to design society." His first submission to the Japan Advertising Artists Club (JAAC) exhibition in 1955 was the poster *Umi wo kaese* (Give Our Sea Back), which won him the Grand Prize and launched him into the limelight. Depicting an aged fisherman at Kujukuri Beach, a fishing grounds appropriated as a US army firing range, it contained a strong message for the society he had looked hard at. Thereafter, he continued to create posters supporting the democratization of Korea and banning of thermonuclear weapons, and remained committed to socially engaged design, based on a stance of "designing society." In today's diversifying society, the question of what we ourselves can do carries increasing weight and importance. Under this theme, the exhibition will display Awazu works selected for their socially engaged design, with a focus on his posters.

**Our entire Awazu Kiyoshi archives database, open to public access**

Since 2006, some 3,000 works and materials in the artist's collection have been gifted to this museum and carefully researched. In marking this exhibition held a decade after Awazu's passing, the museum will open its entire Awazu Kiyoshi archives database to public access. A portion of the images will also be downloadable for use. Through *non-hierarchical image reproduction*, a condition Awazu viewed as a "popular icon" of creative freedom, we will carry on the artist's spirit.

**Through Awazu Kiyoshi—reappraising postwar Japanese design  
and its impact on design today**

Awazu was ever faithful to his own design vision—the reproduction and mass production of motifs and images evoking Japan's native land and culture. Skilled at adding his own interpretation to amplify the image in the viewer's mind, he created numerous book covers and theater posters, and played an important role in the culture of the times. Through Sixties works by Awazu, we will retrospect postwar Japanese design and its response to new cultural phenomena of the time. Delving into the thought processes of postwar designers, we will explore the possibilities latent in design.

## About the artist

## AWAZU Kiyoshi

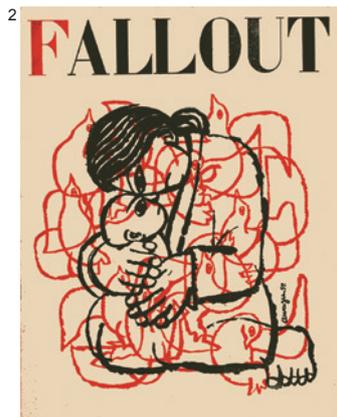
Born 1929 in Tokyo, died 2009 in Kawasaki. Self-taught in painting and design. In 1955, Awazu received the Japan Advertising Artists Club Award for his poster Give Our Sea Back. He was a leader in post-war graphic design in Japan and involved in the development as creative expression of reproduction and mass production of images using printing technology. In 1960, he participated in the architectural movement "Metabolism", and in 1977, exhibited his work Graphism, Three Part Work at the Bienal de São Paulo. From the 1980s onward, he conducted a study of hieroglyphics and the written language of Native Americans. He continued to question not only images and the act of communication, but also human existence itself within the entirety of all living things. The foresight and totality of his creative activity still has a major impact today.

Exhibition  
Composition

Gallery 1

## Changing our society

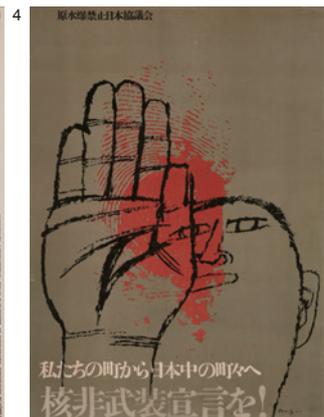
A designer active in Japan's postwar reconstruction, Awazu Kiyoshi is known for design motifs such as turtles and crows evoking Japan's native land and culture, rendered boldly in primary colors. Nevertheless, a profound awareness of society permeates Awazu's works. Approached by serious thinkers and activists, in need of socially related designs, Awazu Kiyoshi undertook such jobs with sincere interest. Influenced by Lithuanian-born artist Ben SHAHN (1898-1969), Awazu felt that, rather than objectify naked facts, design needed to express them in a way that would touch people's hearts. Herein we find the crux of Awazu's design stance.



[Magazine] 『FALLOUT』  
(The Japan Council Against Atomic  
and Hydrogen Bombs) (Cover) 1957



[Poster] International Crisis Rally in Support  
of the Korean Democratization Struggle  
(Hibiya Park Public Hall, International  
Crisis Symposium on Korean Issues) 1977

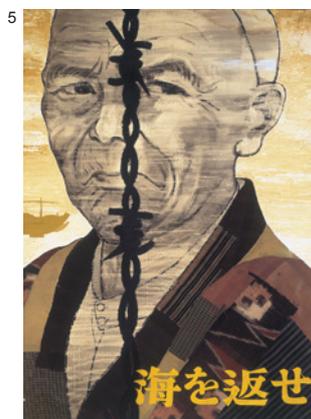


[Poster] Ban Thermonuclear Weapons!  
1958

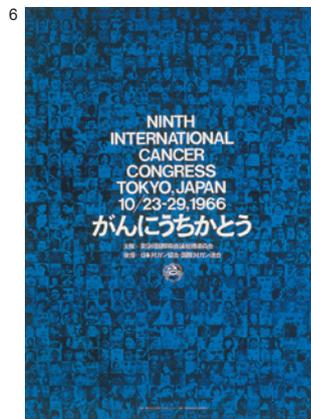
Gallery 2

## What can design do

Awazu Kiyoshi, who at 12 years of age set out amid the ruins of war, found refreshment in watching movies and drawing. Teaching himself to draw by sketching in the carriages of the looping Yamanote Line, every day, he looked deeply at the strong lives of hard-working people. His poster *Umi wo kaese* (Give Our Sea Back), a work of socially engaged design, was selected for the Japan Advertising Artists Club (JAAC) exhibition, and launched him into the limelight. After hearing Herbert BAYER advocate a social role for design at the 1960 World Design Conference in Tokyo, however, Awazu Kiyoshi grew more committed to socially engaged activities. As events of national importance were held, such as the 1964 Olympics and 1970 Osaka Expo, opportunities for designers rapidly expanded, yet Awazu—sensing a danger of design's standardization—gave support to the publication of *Design Journal* and activities of Bikyoto (Council of Artists for a United Front) and intensified his social activities.



Umi wo kaese  
(Give Back Our Sea; original picture) 1955



[Poster] Gan ni uchikato  
(“Let's Beat Cancer”; 9th International Cancer Congress, 9th International Cancer Congress Organizing Committee) 1966

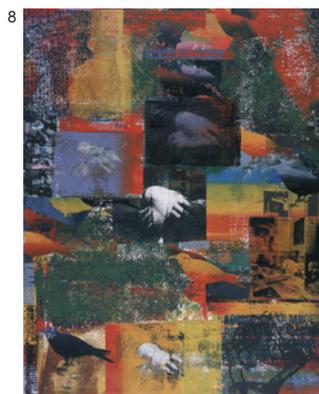


[Poster] Say Something Now I'm Trying  
(Sogetsu Art Center Design Criticism) 1968

Gallery 3

## Aura of duplication

A work submitted in the São Paulo Biennial. Gathering original drawings and illustrations intended for duplication, Awazu reproduced them collage-like in a triptych, using oil paints. Bringing a silk-screen printing plate to the São Paulo venue, he duplicated the triptych as a photograph, transferred the photograph to silk screen, and finally stenciled it on the floor. The work featured the “popular icons” he had repeatedly employed as motifs—fingerprints, maps, seal impressions, ABE Sadas, anatomical charts, birds, Mona Lisas, and pages from dictionaries. “Popular” means “of the people”—the precious existence of each individual in society. Unlike Walter BENJAMIN (1892-1940, born in Germany) who felt that duplicative media robbed artworks of their aura, Awazu believed that the aura stolen from artworks inhabited the duplicative medium and possessed sacred value. The painting *Graphism Trilogy* is a crystallization of Awazu's beliefs.



Graphism Trilogy 1977



Gallery 4

**Design—a fertile ground for the birth of culture**

Perhaps because any design he created displayed his individual flair, Awazu Kiyoshi rarely undertook commercial design work. He did, however, create an enormous number of book covers and theater and film posters. Thoroughly reading the script or manuscript, he would richly amplify the appeal of the book or drama by adding his own interpretation to the design. In this sense, it was essentially a work of collaboration with other creators. Moreover, placing high importance on giving design a place in everyday life, he worked to ensure that posters and books were present in locations central to ordinary people's lives.



[Poster] *Suna no onna (la femme du sable)*, teshigahara production) 1964



[Poster] *SHONIN SHINRAN* (AOYAMA SHOIN PUBLISHING CORP) 1957



[Poster] *Chinomure* (Kinokuniya Hall, Bungakuza theater company) 1969



*Picture Scroll of Characters Appearing in Yasha-ga-ike* 1979

Gallery 4 Adjacent Space

**An undying interest in people**

Displayed in this gallery—Awazu's photos of Aomori prefecture, inspired by the DAZAI Osamu novel, *Tsugaru*. No mere travelogue, that novel examined Dazai's spiritual homeland in Aomori. Impressed by a spiritual homeland's strength to support one in contemporary society, Awazu traveled to Aomori prefecture to photograph people living and working there, and created a "photo document of a people's lifestyle." Like his early sketches, the photos reveal the depth of Awazu Kiyoshi's interest in the lives of ordinary people.



[Poster] *Takizaki no yado nite* ("At a Cape Taki Inn") 1959

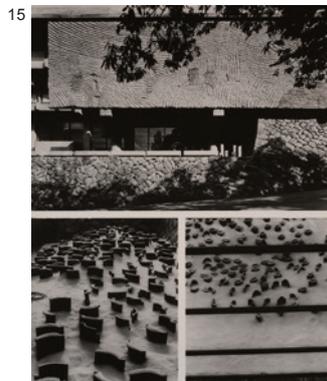


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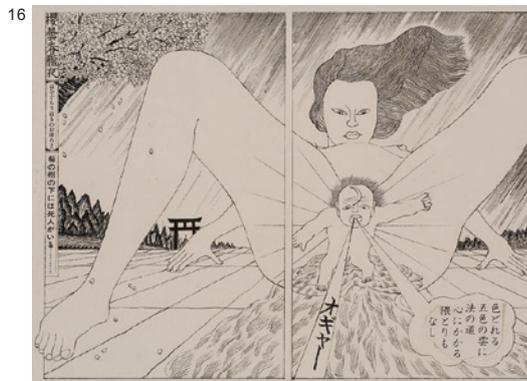
Gallery 5

**Moving into environmental design**

Awazu ever explored new territories, asking the question, “What can design do?” In 1960, he joined architectural critic KAWAZOE Noboru and young architects KIKUTAKE Kiyonori and KUROKAWA Kisho in forming the movement, “Metabolism.” Under the term “environmental design,” he became involved in designing cities and buildings able to grow organically and accommodate society’s changes. An example is his design for a wall relief and inner garden at Tsuyama Culture Center. For the wall relief, he expressed the Metabolist interest in the morphology of organisms, using the metaphor of a cloud. For the inner garden, he gathered discarded roof tiles around the city and embedded them, envisaging each tile as the soul of an aborted fetus, and created the image of souls flowing in a river. His later manga *Sutetaro* was inspired by this production.



[Photograph Panel]  
Tsuyama Culture Center Wall Relief and Garden  
1966

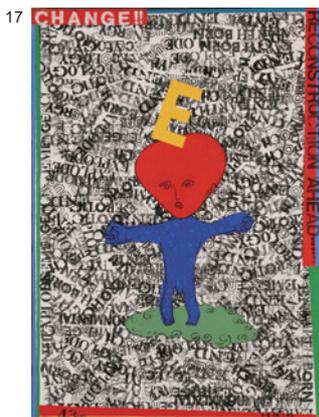


Causal Narrative *Sutetaro*  
(original picture) 1972

Gallery 6

**The Sutetaro years: popular icons, Chichibu Avantist, Korean Art Prints**

Art critic HARIU Ichiro used the term “popular icons” for the ABE Sadas, sea turtles, seal impressions, fetuses, H<sup>2</sup>O Earthmen, unknown fishermen, and other indigenous motifs that Awazu employed as motifs. Numerous such “popular icons”—valued by Awazu for their open and non-hierarchical character—will be displayed on one gallery wall. “Awazu Kiyoshi’s spirit still lives today,” says Awazu Ken. As evidence, he will select for this gallery contemporary works by the Chichibu Avantist, which uniquely embodies the Awazu spirit. Also featured—works from the Minjung (People’s) Art Prints collection of YANG Mingi, displayed under the supervision of Korean art and culture scholar FURUKAWA Mika with Yang Mingi’s daughter, YANG Soel, Higashi-kujo Madang Committee Chairman.



Earthman of Change 1993



Portrait of a Woman  
(oil paint, silk screen / canvas 162×112 cm)  
1977



LOVE is REAL  
(silk screen / paper 34×25.7 cm) 1979

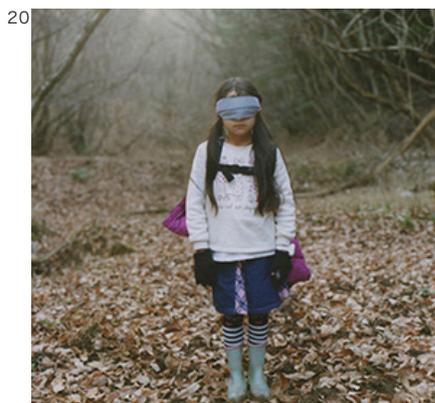
## CHICHIBU AVANTIST

CHICHIBU AVANTIST is an art movement and collective in Saitama's Chichibu led by SASAKUBO Shin, who, influenced by his experiences in Peru, is investigating Chichibu's folklore, cultural anthropology, history, traditions, folk songs, regional character, and village environment. On this basis, he is rediscovering Chichibu's fundamental avant-garde character and magical and mythical traditions. Sasakubo takes regional research aimed at rediscovery of identity as his number one field, with activities of embodying that research in artworks as his number two field. In recent years, he is creating art with a focus on Chichibu's sacred Mt. Buko, a limestone mountain continually mined and destroyed to produce cement. Sasakubo Shin, composer of the "Sutetaro Suite," frequently performs as a guitarist and engages in writing and publishing.

## Minjung (People's) Arts Prints

The Minjung Art Prints (art printings of the people) were created by artists who engaged in "the Minjung (peoples) Art Movement" in response to the South Korean Democracy Movement that took place between the late 1970s and 1980s. The woodcut prints were people's "weapon of resistance" for the nation's political reform, and had functioned as a medium for exploring cultural roots. These prints eventually travelled across the ocean to be appreciated in Japan. An individual who was largely involved in this was Yang Mingi (1934-2013), a second-generation Korean activist living in Japan. Yang, who introduced "Madang" (participatory political street theater, which was a part of Korea's cultural movement) to Japan, had obtained the prints in the process of implementing cultural movements in Osaka, Tokyo, and Kyoto among others as a means of expressing his support for the democratization of neighboring South Korea that was undergoing severe oppression.

In addition to both old and new works by HONG Seon Wang (1952-) who had traveled back and forth between South Korea and Japan as he engaged in the production of woodcut, exhibited on this occasion are the works of OH Yoon (1946-1986) that depicted typical everyday scenes of people, KIM Bong-jun (1954-) who engraved agricultural and industrial landscapes, HONG Sung dam (1955-) known for conveying scenes of the Gwangju Uprising, and JUNG jung Yeob (1962-) who led the feminist movement in Korean art. These are vibrant reflections of the times, and can be considered as traces of the means by which Koreans and second generation Koreans living in Japan like Yang Mingi had attempted "generate their own culture." Such works also resonate with Awazu Kiyoshi's spirit, as an individual who had turned his awareness towards the third world, removed the boundaries between various fields of art, and engaged in confronting society. Furthermore, the activities of generating their own culture have been passed down to the next generation, in the form of "Higashi Kujo Madang" in Kyoto led by figures such as Yang Seol, and while sympathizing with Awazu Kiyoshi's creative practice, continues to evolve and develop today.



SASAKUBO Shin *Chichibu Girl* 2018



HONG Seong-Ung *Inori ("Prayer")* 1987

## Related Event

**Opening Talk**

**Guests:** AWAZU Ken (this exhibition's planning supervisor) & JIKUHARA Kosuke (designer, this exhibition's graphic design coordinator)

**Date/time:** Saturday May 18, 2019 14:00-15:30

**Venue:** Lecture Hall, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

**Talk & Live Performance**

**Guests:** [Talk] SASAKUBO Shin (Chichibu Avantist) & SAWARAGI Noi (art critic, professor, Tama Art University art department)

[Live performance] Chichibu Avantist

**Date/time:** Saturday June 8, 2019 14:00-15:00 (Talk) 15:30-16:30 (Live)

**Venue:** Lecture Hall, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

**Lecture: "Under the Spell of Korean Minjung Print Art —The World Seen and Depicted by YANG Mingi and AWAZU Kiyoshi**

**Guests:** YANG Soel (Higashi-kujo Madang Committee Chairman) & FURUKAWA Mika (Korean art & culture scholar, part-time lecturer, Joshibi University of Art and Design)

**Date/time:** Saturday July 6, 2019 14:00-15:30

**Venue:** Lecture Hall, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

**Capacity:** 80 people (by order of arrival, no application needed)

**Admission:** Free

**FURUKAWA Mika**

Born in Tokyo. Korean art and culture scholar. Part-time lecturer, Joshibi University of Art and Design. Completed course in Korean language studies, Yonsei University, Korea. Special investigation examiner, Embassy of Japan in Seoul (1993-96). Furukawa is the author of *Kankoku no minshu bijitsu—Teiko no bigaku to shiso* ("Korean Minjung Art—The Aesthetics and Philosophy of Resistance"), Iwanami Shoten, 2018. She has written essays for such publications as *Hanryu handobukku* ("Korean Handbook," Shinshokan) and co-authored *Higashi ajia no yasukunizum* ("East Asia's Yasukunism," Yuigakushobu).

**YANG Soel**

Higashi-kujo Madang Committee Chairman. "Madang" is the Korean word for "public square." The Higashi-kujo Madang began with the aim of becoming a community festival in Higashi-kujo, a Kyoto district where Zainichi Koreans, Japanese, and other people of varying social perspective live together. Yang Soel has coordinated the creation of Madang street theater performances for many years. In 2010, she enrolled as an adult in the academic research program, Graduate School of Core Ethics and Frontier Sciences, Ritsumeikan University. She is currently researching the Minjung (People's) Culture movement activities of Yang Mingi and festival trends in Higashi-kujo district.

\* Changes in planning are apt to occur

\* For details on this and other related programs please see our website ([www.kanazawa21.jp](http://www.kanazawa21.jp))

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Please send a publication (paper), URL, DVD or CD to the museum for our archives, afterwards.