A Line is A Crack, Separated Continuums, Early Lines Paintings Untitled

A line is a crack is a provisional definition,absolute perhaps only in the works in which it appears and perhaps not even then. After all it is not as though it read"All lines are cracks'' or "Aline must be a Crarack."

This is significant because only with provisional definition may any thinker liberate himself from absolutism while still making a statement *(Bernard Heyl) It is important in this context to realize that even art work which previously was thought to all allow the widest range of ambiguity such as the meditative fields of color of someone such as Rothko or the ready-mades of M.Duchamp have roots.in an absolute, that is, the individual and his belief in his decision. A presentation of an unexamined or uncontrolled ambiguity suggests either belief. For an individual to avoid absolutism he must question his beliefs,his coices. Yet even a critical choice contains an implicit belief which can only be confirmed or neutralizedthrough investigation modifcation. of that verychoice. This is what most art does not do because it is usually the expression of the choice or the investigation of the means of expression rather than of the choice itself.

(I.A.Richards)

an artist

would

critical choice or

ARAKAWA

A LINE IS A CRACK

PARADOXICALLY, THE PAINTED DIAGRAM

ARAKAWA IN THE 1960S

Julia Robinson

You use canvas. You use paint. ...but this is not... painting.
—Duchamp to Arakawa[1]

The placement, property of meaning as it shifts through dimensions can be depicted through diagrams. [...] If I could use words as objects, that would be something. —Arakawa[2]

The paradoxical project Arakawa developed in the 1960s was centered on diagrammatic painting. If these last two terms seem mutually exclusive, the artist needed both in order to have them affect each other. At once a model and a tool of *abstraction*, the diagram—on these grounds alone—could undermine that long-dominant genre of modernist painting. It could empty out conventional pictorial space, recode it, create openings, and new registers of signification. The diagram supported the aim of recalibrating the engagement between the work and the spectator/interpreter. If it could redefine the signifiers that the subject encounters in the work of art, while recasting the space of painting, the diagram could also stimulate new networks of cognitive association. Arakawa used that matrix to open up the space of subjective projection—to position unorthodox and unfamiliar catalysts for perception, what he would later refine as "landing sites"—and generate new dynamics of thought within it. He wanted his work to have the potential to be grasped in many ways; for future interlocutors to make something of each and every constellation of languages in his art. "For 'languages,' one should read *types of signs,*" Charles Haxthausen has written, "one of which was nearly always language, while others were iconic or indexical or a combination of the two."[3] At a major historical turning point, as painting proper gave way to a panoply of experimental, post- disciplinary *solutions* for what might come next, Arakawa's diagram was one. Artists in his midst were involved in related pursuits, developing (undetermined) linguistic scores whose short verbal prompts flickered this way and that, mobilizing the additional scope of ambiguity, or the limit of unembellished simplicity, such that the proposition begged engagement by prospective interlocutors. Signifier and gap were placed to prompt others to take the painting and its languages in the given form and *realize* them (to use a Fluxus term). Artists of all stripes cre-

ated works that could be interacted with, rearranged, even walked on, to tie them to the here and now of the work, thus generating fresh, circumstantial meaning.[4] Arakawa and his partner, the poet Madeline Gins, worked as artist-philosophers, deploying various semantic systems simultaneously within one field, sparking speculative processes riddled with mental mines, non sequiturs, significant expanses of blank, and other conundra. Rather than a closed, finalized artwork, they were interested in the *mechanism of meaning* (to cite the title of one of their most elaborate collaborations).

For all the paintings Arakawa made, he insisted that paint was not his medium; nor, for that matter, was art. "My 2 or 3 decisions in the same place establish my media."[5] He must have been delighted when Duchamp told him that despite his use of paint and canvas, he wasn't making paintings. At this moment, to be working contra painting—paradoxically *via painting* in Arakawa's case—was to be at the lead edge of emergent artistic practice.[6] From our present perspective, with Arakawa's total output in view, we know that he made several striking leaps in his work through the 1960s. We see him starting out making an extensive series of macabre sculptural works, housed in heavy, dark wood boxes lined with pink and purple satin, whose lids were to be removed by visitors. Made in Tokyo (1958–61) and continued in New York (1962–64), the forms inside the boxes and box-frames went from amorphous lumps of cement, to foam rubber (sometimes inscribed with pencil and other markers), and gradually became more elaborate and technically intricate, with the addition of glass tubes, lights, and other machinery. He was apparently running several very different kinds of work parallel, having embarked on series of quiet, spare, and predominantly white paintings as of 1962. After a year or so in New York, Arakawa begins to advance and switch gears more quickly, creating paintings with rayograph-like object impressions with white spray paint. In 1965 he starts works using a foundation of found blueprints, and creates projected floorplans on canvas. Relating to this indexical thrust are the paintings based on the concept of the diagram, manifested in multiple forms, which are, in a sense, the culmination of his thought and intentions at mid-decade. But whence do all of these significant progressions emerge? It will be the task of this essay to

restore the kaleidoscopic movement of aims, dialogues, sources and concepts through which Arakawa brought this work into being.

It should be said that tracing Arakawa's artistic trajectory in the 1960s, to elucidate the core criteria that drove his project, requires that we dispel a few myths. At the same time, each 'chapter' of work begs to be clarified and contextualized as rigorously as possible (based on the evidence we have). The myth that looms the largest has to do with Marcel Duchamp. I use the term myth not to negate the importance of this pivotal figure for Arakawa but to propose that we move beyond the anecdotal, often superficial evocations of the French artist's contact with him from 1961 onward.[7] As this postwar moment was the most exponentially far-reaching in the century's Duchamp reception—in terms of following, emulation, and admiration—we need to bring to bear sufficient specifics for the account to hold up art historically. Now is a perfect time to undertake a precise analysis of Arakawa's works, how they functioned, affected, and were affected by the advanced art being produced contemporaneously, and the contribution they made in the expanded field of 1960s art.

What has been missing, not merely from the commentary of the critics at the time (Lawrence Alloway, et al), but even in the much later and more thorough analyses of scholars like Haxthausen, is the reckoning about what, exactly, the young Arakawa saw in the Duchampian project. What was it that he first grasped and applied? Why did he assign Duchamp such importance in his own artistic development? This latter itself is unusual; it must be said. Most of his peers have swept Duchamp under the carpet, as it were. Indeed, Arakawa's thought and the several strains of work he pursued through the Sixties have much to reveal, not only about the contours of his own larger oeuvre, but about what must have been scintillating dialogues among artists—specifically regarding the brilliant but hermetic example of Duchamp, and what to do with it—that have long since been lost.

At the outset of the New York chapter, which for Arakawa began in December 1961, a handful of important published sources on Duchamp (in English) were available. The most central to the radical transformation of all aspects of art at the hands of his generation were the following: Robert Motherwell, ed., *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 1951, Robert

Lebel's monograph on Duchamp, 1959, and George Heard Hamilton and Richard Hamilton's verbal and graphic translation of the notes for *The Green Box in The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even* (as a bound book) in 1960.[8] The philosophical-critical stance coupled with unheard-of artistic materials and strategies that was suddenly delivered to the new generation is impossible to list, let alone to exhaust. Still, we can point to a few details that mattered for Arakawa.[9] At this juncture, we will just briefly introduce some ideas to indicate the value of each source. First of all, *The Dada Painters and Poets* presented a wealth of primary source material on Dada, and one long and substantial essay on Duchamp. The latter, Harriet and Sidney Janis' *Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist*, laid out his thought so carefully and aptly that one feels the artist was intimately involved with the text. Intricate descriptions of his methods, which went as far as explaining their crucial links to his philosophical position, and presented key examples of his works (along with the conceptual framework that was their *raison d'etre*).

Let us, for a moment, take two such explanations that are especially relevant to Arakawa. First, there is the *Unhappy Readymade*, 1918: a proposition Duchamp came up with requiring the recipients of his instructions to tie a geometry textbook to the railing of their balcony, to subject it to the elements. Apropos of the diagrammatic, it presents an extraordinary model, expanding the reach of that abstract structure in space and in time. We can hardly fail to grasp that it seizes many things that are not it, and crucially vis à vis Arakawa's project, it arguably expands the diagrammatic into three, if not four dimensions. It is also in this essay that we find mention of the relationship of the line to the crack (of which Arakawa would make so much), which the Janises suggest, uncannily forecast the fate of the *Large Glass*.[10] They announce this via the experiment-cum-artwork-cum-plotting-and measuring-device, the *Three Standard Stoppages*, 1914:

> These lines, titled *3 stoppages étalon*, 1913–14, arranged into three different groupings for a total of nine, were projected on the large glass in relation to the nine malic forms. The lines fanned out like huge cracks, anticipating the direction the actual cracks took when the glass was eventually broken by accident.[11]

"The line is a crack," was Arakawa's ode to Duchamp, projected through multiple artistic methods, from painting to printmaking and back.

The next major resource was Robert Lebel's monograph *[Sur] Marcel Duchamp*, published in French and English editions in 1959. Many details from this rich, multi-chapter account of Duchamp's *parcours* reappear in the statements of artists—and even the macro direction of art—through the 1960s (notably, for our purposes, in Jasper Johns as well as Arakawa). In short, there is the argument for using compasses to draw circles (with reference to Duchamp's 'last' painting *Tu m'*, and the cue he himself took from Wassily Kandinsky).[12] In Lebel one could also find the first of many *electricity* references that become one clear mode of rendering the *Large Glass* itself.[13] Amongst all else, the Lebel volume also provided one of the first extensive, researched lists of his works that Lebel considered a *catalogue raisonné*, along with other commentaries, rare photographs and documents (and a transcription of Duchamp's important lecture on "The Creative Act"). Finally, as of 1960, there was the translation and diagramming of all Duchamp's notes for *The Large Glass*, by George Heard Hamilton and Richard Hamilton, respectively.[14] In the following account of Arakawa we will be attempting to draw something from clear correspondence between his and his peers' utterly original concepts and works, and a few of the individual notes (from the Green Box) with which Duchamp had first challenged himself. Most importantly, this difficult body of work and thought, perhaps the most complex and cryptic testimony to his thought that Duchamp left, also helps us clarify the leap Arakawa (and Arakawa and Gins) made from discrete propositions, like Arakawa's individual paintings, to work that took on the overarching logic of *meaning making* in the mind/body of the spectator/perceiver. It is this extensive collection of ideas rendered with diagrams, and vice versa, that would so interest Arakawa, as he grasped (and sought to extend) the extraordinary polyvalency of Duchampian semantics.

In the Sixties, the first decade (of five) that Arakawa lived and worked in New York, his art developed rapidly, moved across dimensions, and became more and more conceptually oriented, before taking on phenomenological space as well. He began that period making three-dimensional box pieces lined with silk, which grew in scale from something like that of a drawer up to life sized. The paintings that ran

parallel to the boxes (1962 onward) all but negated the term. These started out monochromatic, and progressively incorporated expanses of soft color, before embracing the concept and the functions of the diagrammatic. The complexity of the latter order changed, as the artist gave individual works various kinds of markups, legends, title plates, scoring and stenciling. Once words entered the field of Arakawa's art, the work began building its own semantic density, as the signifiers formed their own matrix (albeit made of units of language, letters, as much as in lines). He also took some shorter side paths that would prove both instructive and formative; one of these was the series of "blueprint paintings." As original and various as the resulting oeuvre became, each 'chapter' emerged from phases in his thinking on Duchamp, as well as his proximity to and dialogues with peers pursuing related (concrete, linguistic, phenomenological—conceptual) trajectories. In what follows, I trace the conceptual field in which Arakawa's early work was stimulated and defined.

2.
112 CHAMBERS ST

In...1962 the sculptor Arakawa arrived from Japan and displaced me in the loft. He spoke almost no English but I somehow understood that he wanted to make me a ...meal. Perhaps he felt guilty about me having to move out.[15] —Robert Morris

The box for a human body to enter [Morris' Box for Standing] must have been a great shock to the Japanese sculptor Arakawa Shūsaku when he arrived in New York. While he was still living in Japan, Arakawa had made a series of coffins, but his coffins were intended to be a container for objects made of cement, a sort of visualization of his ideas. Morris, on the other hand, was simply making boxes.[16]— Katsuhiro Yamaguchi

Fig. 1: Contact sheets of Robert Morris's artworks at 112 Chambers Street, New York, 1961–1962

In 1962, the lease-holder of 112 Chambers Street, Yoko Ono, offered the loft to the newly-arrived Arakawa, and asked its temporary occupant, Robert Morris, to vacate.[17] At the time, Morris was working with some spare, wood structures (Fig. 1)—most in the form of a box—that he had made for his partner, the dancer-choreographer Simone Forti, to use for an array of new works she performed. One imagines Arakawa entering "Morris'" loft, still populated with these impressively plain objects, which must have struck him as the quintessence of restraint. Their consistency by then must have given a sense, at least, that something definite, if inscrutable, had driven the artist to play out this line of thought. When Arakawa showed up, there may have been enough of these box pieces, quasi-architectural structures, that Morris could elaborate on what he had in mind. Most were tall, fairly narrow in breadth, and empty—containers with a door (cabinet-like), or without, akin to the proverbial pine box—close enough to the average person's height that it

Fig. 2: Simone Forti, *See-Saw*, Reuben Gallery, New York, December 16–18, 1960. Performed by Robert Morris and Yvonne Rainer

might have been tempting to enter them, even rest inside for a moment. In other cases, like the portal structure, the implicit prompt is to pass through. Even the works that look like exceptions, like the thin, rectangular (stele) form with rounded top, seem to share something with the larger experiment. If we had to guess at the predominant idea here, it might be *passage* (as though Morris were exploring that Duchampian concept). Insofar as the stele form evokes milestones on old country roads, or the ancient stelae on mastaba tombs that perform the role of "false doors"—another portal type—between this world and the next, they remain markers of passing by, or passing through. The idea of *passage* is reinforced by a more ambitious, room-scale work Morris created at 112 Chambers a little after he made the abovementioned works (summer 1961); it invited visitors to enter it, and walk through a

spiral tunnel that ran fifty feet into the loft (listening to the sound of a heartbeat). Morris first titled the piece *An Environment*, but decided, retroactively, to rename it *Passageway*.

Although Arakawa arrived a few months too late to see the now-mythical "loft concerts" at 112 Chambers Street, which took place in spring 1961, he probably heard about them from Ono, her husband Ichiyanagi Toshi, or Morris himself. In one sense, the program was a reflection of a rare moment when artists were thinking together, giving feedback on people's work, and actively contributing to a dynamic, supportive artistic community. To indicate some of the revelations that made the loft concerts—and contemporaneous, artist-organized programs—so important, and to imagine what was conveyed to Arakawa as he took up residence in that space, it may be interesting to look at these fairly well-known events from a new angle. Let's consider the possibility that Forti was one of the first to react to the most hermetic Duchamp, which had set the downtown artistic scene on fire, and had been obsessing Morris, her partner, since they arrived in New York (1960). Forti's earliest pieces, actions centered on the aforementioned wood structures (planes, planks, and boxes) have been analyzed mostly under the rubrics of postmodern dance and proto-minimalism. What has never been explored is the question of whether or how this work could reflect a *dialogue* with Morris regarding the example of Duchamp. The Hamilton translation of the complete notes for *The Large Glass* was available, most complicated now was what to do with it. At this point, being able to make a piece that illuminated one of the notes was a feat; and indeed, it did start one by one.

Let us take just three quick examples from the larger field of Forti's work at this time, *See-Saw*, 1960, *Slant Board* and *Platforms*, 1961, and look at them vis à vis select passages from Duchamp's notes. This is not to try to match things one-to-one. Indeed, part of Forti's achievement is that each of her works of this moment have become landmarks without this aspect ever entering the analysis. *See-Saw* was part of a program at the Reuben Gallery in December 1960.[18] For the first performance the activators of the work were Morris and dancer-choreographer Yvonne Rainer (Fig. 2). Forti has described it as follows:

> The piece, performed by a man and a woman, is about twenty minutes long. It requires a plank about eight feet long, and a saw-horse, used together as a see-saw. At the end of each plank, three hooks correspond to hooks placed in the two opposite walls. Elastics are attached from the hooks in the walls to the hooks in the boards, forming a long line from wall to wall which zigs and zags as the see-saw shifts balance back and forth. [...] The beginning of See-Saw was signaled by the lights going off and on at intervals of about six seconds. [...] For a long time they simply see-sawed up and down. Then they did several combinations of movements which shifted the balance. [...] Bob pulled a copy of *ArtNews* out of his pocket and read aloud in a monotonous, self-contained voice.[19]

The last detail of Morris reading monotonously from an issue of *ArtNews* would seem to be his contemporary take on Duchamp's "Litanies" (of the chariot). Here is the relevant Duchamp note:

> [More simply]:
> the glider goes and comes.
> It goes: a weight falls
> And makes it go.
> It comes:
> By friction
> of the runners the metal of the glider
> responds elastically
> i.e. the glider resumes ^a little more slowly
> its first position, as it sends back
> ^in the air the weight . und so weiter *[and so on]*
> By condensation, this
> Weight is denser going
> Down than up
> [find a concrete object which could
> respond to this changing
> density][20]

Fig. 3: Simone Forti, *Slant Board*, Dance construction. Debut performance at 112 Chambers Street, New York, 1961. Image of performance at Galleria L'Attico, Rome, October 30–31, 1968

Slant Board (Fig. 3) was part of Forti's program at 112 Chambers St. called "Five Dance Constructions and Some Other Things" (May 27, 1961). In contrast to *See-Saw*, the prop, or support was just the forty-five degree plane, which she allowed to be seen from several angles. "*Slant Board* is a dance construction," Forti wrote:

> It requires a wooden ramp…leaned against a wall so that it forms a surface inclined at about a 45-degree angle to the floor. […] If a performer needs to rest [s]he may do so by using the ropes any way [s]he can to assume a restful position.[21]

The latter calls up the "state of rest" from Duchamp's notes. The other crucial criterion was "gravity," which the board with the ropes handled well. Gravity in fact became a primary medium in Forti's work, often emphasized so that this element registers. Morris would single out the "rest" built into the instructions for *Slant Board* four years later in his "Notes on Dance."[22] The cue we find in Duchamp is this:

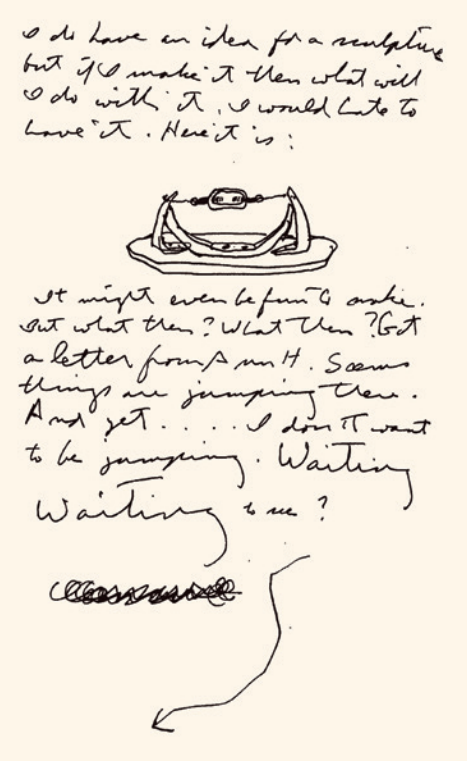


Fig. 4: Simone Forti, "idea for a sculpture," c.1961, in Simone Forti, *Handbook in Motion*. Editor Kasper König by the press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Canada, 1974, p. 49

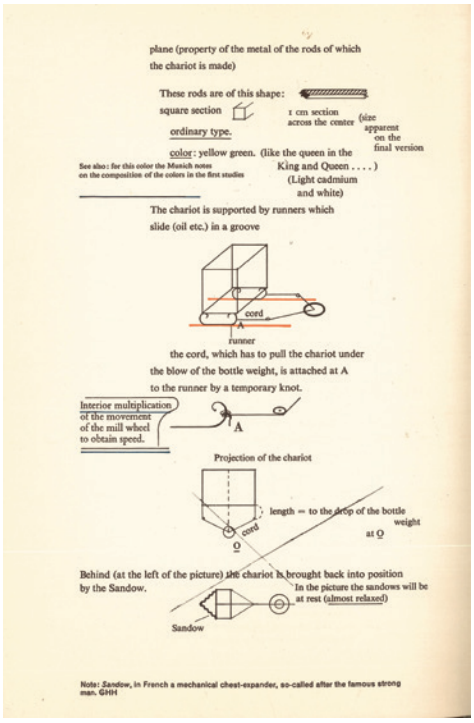


Fig. 5: Marcel Duchamp, Note from *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*: a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box; translated by George Heard Hamilton

Fig 6: Richard Hamilton, *Adonis in Y Fronts*, 1963. Printed by Kelpra Studio Limited and the artist. Screenprint from twelve stencils. Plate: 23 7/8 × 31 7/8 in. (60.6 × 81 cm.). Sheet: 24 7/8 × 32 15/16 in. (63.2 × 83.6 cm.). Gift of Jim Dine, 1979. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

A = The upper part remains fixed and is
only moved in a plane parallll
to its plane. [In
perspective, vertical plane at a
45 [degree] angle seen from the front [23]

Many more vital aspects of Forti's landmark early works evoke tension and strain, that muscular reflection of stored energy that dancers always wield, and its constant potential for release. In Forti's own notebook from this time there is a sketch—to my knowledge, yet to be identified or explained—of something she called a sculpture (Fig. 4). It is a tensile object, in a U-shape, with a wire running across it, which, presumably can be tightened (or loosened) at either end. This too speaks to a detail in Duchamp's notes, the muscle-building contraption called a Sandow, glossed on the same page by George Heard Hamilton, which is likely to have drawn Forti's attention (Fig. 5). The correspondence between Duchamp's diagram and notes, Forti's "sculpture," and a work by Richard Hamilton, *Adonis in Y Fronts*, that features this tool, is worth considering; each illuminates the other (Fig. 6).[24] What became Morris' *Box For Standing,* 1961 began in Forti's work as one of two hollow plywood boxes, big enough to cover a person. Two performers walk out, one lifts one of the hollow boxes for the other to get underneath. Then "he" goes and gets under the other one. She insisted that *Platforms* had to be performed by a man and a woman; they were to be separated, completely cut off from one another. It should go without saying that these boxed-in spaces, male and female, address the gender divide that defines the *Large Glass*. Under the boxes, the pair communicate (however imperfectly) by emitting air and sound in their individual echo chambers; Forti called it "a duet for whistling." Performed before a seeing (and hearing) audience, the piece collaterally addresses Duchamp's critique of the retinal by deprivileging it. One imagines Morris thinking *with* the handful of rudimentary objects—after Forti played out her ideas—reorienting them, removing a few, setting some in new relations to each other, and continuing to shape the concept(s) he had in view, to be able to build on them.

Morris was well-versed in Duchamp already by 1961, as we see by two important and still under-known documents he wrote at the time. The first was part of his correspondence with his friend La Monte Young in California, which included: "Some of the Reasons Why I like Duchamp." Here is Morris:

> [...] He worked almost always with multiple meanings....
> [...] His complete originality.
> [...] He never repeated himself—showing his concern for the weight of ideas...
> His UNDERSTANDING OF TIME [Morris' caps]
> He is the only artist I know of who took account of the future....
> His geometry book—left suspended [outside]... until the wind and rain and rot had reduced it to nothing. Who else invited nature to transmute completely their acts? (and the ideas in the geometry book?) [ed. the Unhappy Readymade, 1918]
> The first to employ chance (sheet of music [Erratum musicale, 1914] parts of the Big Glass), but did not elevate it into a Method or Form—instead hid it away in the glass. [...]
> Acknowledged Indeterminacy—One always sees something else through the Big Glass....
> The found object.
> His transcendence of irony, which... would have trapped a lesser mind.
> The first to incorporate the Machine into art, as form, as allegory on sex, monotony of life.
> Brought [language into]... plastic art—requiring an "act" on part of observer...[25]

A number of these criteria are especially relevant for Arakawa—the "multiple meanings," the concern for "the weight of ideas," the idea of an artist who "took account of the future," and finally, that Duchamp brought *language* into visual art "requiring an 'act' on the part of the observer." As we will see, these points can be traced—in the process of being thought out, charted, positioned in space—in Arakawa's paintings of the 1960s. This waiting, planning for the spectator's contribution in the conception of the painting, is opposed to supplying a finalized meaning, or solving a *problem* the work may pose. Indeed, the most widely addressed of the Duchampian categories is this; the gradual

cultivation of meaning not yet fixed, but plotted out as a cluster of "raw" signifiers (raw in Duchamp's sense of *à l'état brut*) intended to cohere in the mind of the spectator.[26]

The second text Morris wrote is a more formal assessment of the change he was witnessing in art. It was titled "MD Rx" ("Marcel Duchamp, Prescription").[27] This piece of writing and reflection was conceived as Morris' contribution to La Monte Young's compendium of advanced, cross-disciplinary "composition": *An Anthology*.[28] Here Morris describes a more relative "object" of art—*object*, in both senses, *thing* and *aim*—no longer intended to function *in and of itself* so much as to mediate, anchor, and organize a dynamic, multi-dimensional field. Already, in his opening line, Morris scuttles the self-reference/self-reflexivity that underpinned the theoretical apparatus of late Modernism: "The death of art is its concern for itself. The special experience...". With reference to the first glimmers of a wholly new approach to art, he speaks of a "reaction against excessive formalism" manifested as: *Rules, language, logic, process, time*. "Art is being reduced to the idea," Morris wrote. Remarkably prognostic for the undecided moment of 1961 was the artist's pronouncement:

> *Appearing now are the first signs of an art the concerns of which are successions of concepts to which materializations are referential. Whether the materializations (signs) be actions or objects they exist as counterpart and/or exposition of ideas rather than... developments, through process, of forms. [...] The emphasis on the weight of the idea and its subsequently presented exposition (those overt acts taken from a choice among numerous possibilities) is, of course, [an] historical precedent [of/for the present]; established by Marcel Duchamp in his Green Box—Large Glass.* [29]

It is useful as a testimony from a specific moment, 1961, that Morris shone a light on the *Green Box*. For our analysis of Arakawa who is often placed in this category, is the mention of "concepts," and "emphasis on the weight of the idea"—many years before the establishment of Conceptual Art (in the late 1960s).[30] No one was using the term concept /conceptual at the start of the decade. Morris as good as identifies Duchamp as the source of this whole tendency in '60s art. The "overt

acts taken from a choice among numerous possibilities" signals chance protocols, speaking of Duchamp but alluding to John Cage.[31] In the actual relation of the *Green Box* to the *Large Glass* the relationship of research/notes/ideas to what is realized in the final work is the emphasis Duchamp wanted.[32] This interested Arakawa (and Gins)—among others—to promote *research* as integral in their artistic process. Finally, Morris uses Duchampian terms, "processes moving toward 'precision" to forecast strategies that would assume immense importance in his generation:

> *If the greatest economy in this direction is the reduction... to the abstract symbols of language, charts, plans, scores, descriptions of events and objects, it is neither to imply... that the materializations indicated... are irrelevant, nor to establish an obvious epistemological dualism between ideas and concretions, but rather it is to state that the primary and operative area is the former....*[33]

3.
BOXING MATCH

Nishikawa: You and Arakawa organized a group show in 1963, correct? Did Yoshimura also participate?

Ay-O: Yes... Robert Morris joined as well, so there was a total of four artists. The show was called *Boxing Match*.... Yoshimura had produced boxes. Arakawa... was working on coffins. Morris was making more abstract work with simple, cubic forms.

Kajiya: Why did you call the exhibition *Boxing Match*?

Ay-O: Because we all made boxes, you know.

Kajiya: Of course.[34]

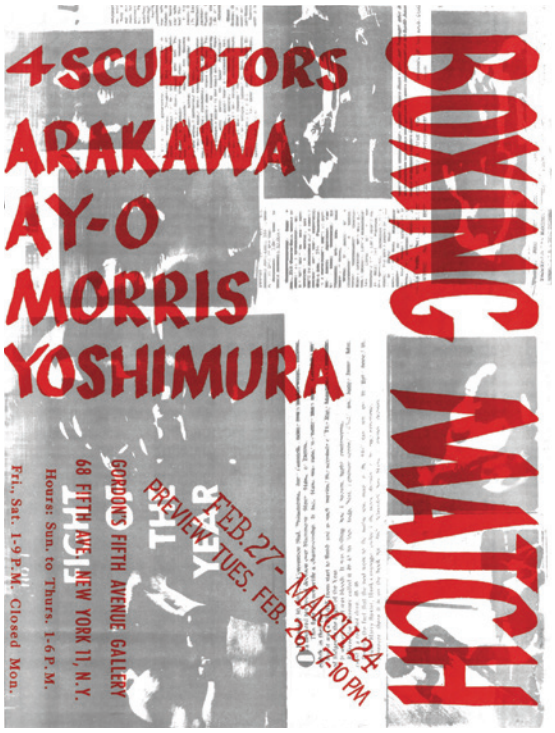


Fig. 7: Announcement for the exhibition *Boxing Match, 4 Sculptors: Arakawa, Ay-O, Morris, Yoshimura*, Gordon's Fifth Avenue Gallery, February 27–March 24, 1963

The installation photographs from the exhibition Arakawa and Ay-O organized (Feb. 27–Mar. 24, 1963) (Fig. 7) reveal an irreducibly bizarre grouping: Arakawa's coffin-boxes, Ay-O's canvases with vacuum cleaner tubes and illuminated light bulbs protruding from them (with one illuminated painting with Duchamp's *Coeur Volants [Flying Hearts]* form cut into the side), Yoshimura Masunobu's tall, white-ribbed columns with bulbous protrusions, and Morris' clean, gray, hard-edge geometric portal, column, box, etc. All four artists were in fact working with the box format, broadly conceived, but otherwise it is almost impossible to say what they had in common. Obviously, between them, they must have felt some kind of affinity. But the idea that they called the show *Boxing Match* "because we all were making boxes" was not quite accurate. With everyone avowedly thinking about Duchamp, it is

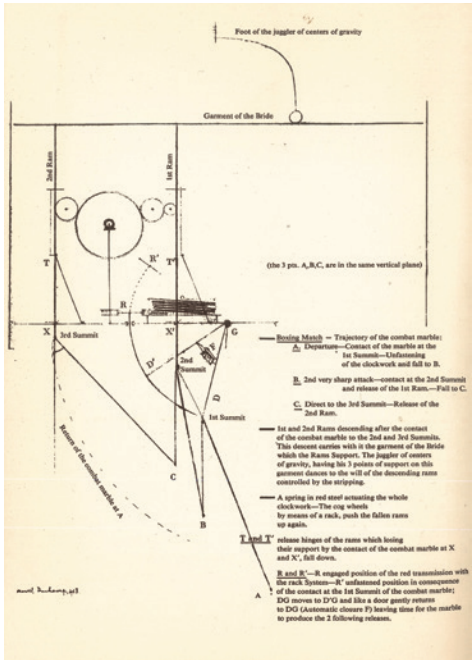


Fig. 8: Marcel Duchamp, *Combat de Boxe (Boxing Match)*, 1913, from *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*: a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box; translated by George Heard Hamilton

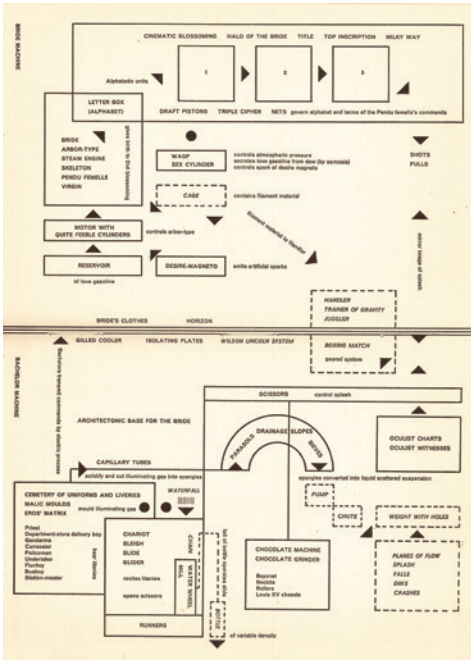


Fig. 9: Richard Hamilton, Diagram from *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*: a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box ; translated by George Heard Hamilton

impossible to ignore the note he titled *Combat de Boxe (Boxing Match)*, which made appearances in several prominent places at once. At Philadelphia, it was as the only note on paper, mounted on the wall in Duchamp's dedicated galleries. Ironically or not, Duchamp did a walk-through of the installation and emphasized that *Combat de Boxe* (Fig. 8) was one note he did not use (realize) in the *Large Glass*.[35] *Boxing Match* (in English) was also featured in the Hamiltons' book, in forms both diagrammatic and verbal (Fig. 9). In a modest supplement to the many pages of diagrammatic sketches and notes by the artist, the book's appendices included Duchamp's *Boxing Match* sketch, and a segment titled the "Diagram," Richard Hamilton's map/decoding of the parts of the Glass, which indicated the position of the *Boxing Match*.[36] So, now, what can we still deduce from these four artists showing together,

and whether they connected "boxes" and Duchamp. This seems to be corroborated by the last impression the artist-critic Yamaguchi Katsuhiro had of artists' attachment to New York after visiting them there: "Even Marcel Duchamp, the Dadaist, precisely because he came to New York, he was able to stay alive. And this whole group of New Yorkers, in a way or another, descend from Duchamp, and none of them can move away from the environment that nurtured Duchamp's thought."[37]

The *Boxing Match* show was crowded. In fact "jammed" was the word Donald Judd used.[38] One gathers that, as this was the first exhibition in New York for everyone except for Ay-O, enthusiasm got the better of them. The clear-headed Judd added that "Yoshimura alone shows enough for a one man show," Judd added. Morris was not immune either. He chose to exhibit more than five works, of which several were sizable. There was *Portal*, 1961, *Untitled (Cloud)*, 1962, *Standing Square*, 1961, *Wheels*, 1963, *Box with the Sound of its Own Making*, 1961, and, according to Judd, "some other small pieces." That Ay-O described Morris' art as "more abstract"—not the term we are used to hearing for this work, but, in the present context, quite apt—underscores how radically different his approach was from everyone else's. This is assuming working through Duchamp was the crux of their coming together. Certainly, as soon as we look through that particular lens, there are allusions and references to the French artist in all the pieces Morris contributed. As noted above, *Portal* evokes the concept of "passage" so crucial in Duchamp (as in *Passage from Virgin to Bride*); *Untitled (Cloud)* probably refers to the cloud section of the *Large Glass* amongst other things; the *Wheels* allude to the water mill in the *Large Glass*; finally, the Duchampian elements in the *Box with the Sound of its Own Making* are too numerous to mention but the auto-referentiality of "its own" echoes the "même" that completes the French title *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*. Arguably there is one other significant element in Morris' approach that distinguished his works so markedly from the rest: the deaestheticization that reflected his interest in the Duchampian "anti-retinal." It explains why all Morris work in wood, plywood, painted the most neutral of colors, specifically (also Duchamp-sourced) gray, is so spare. It is appreciable that the "Box with the Sound" asserts the auditory while withdrawing the visual, and

that the "cloud," at eye-level, cancels sight. This comes up in the reviews of *Boxing Match*. *ArtNews* deemed Morris "the purist of the group," his work, "neutral" and "monolithic."; the "cloud" was singled out in distinctly antiretinal terms: the "horizontal box (a gray plane) suspended at eye level, gives a curious effect of blindness."[39] Most memorably, Judd, who appreciated the "cloud," or "horizontal slab," as he called it, revealed his skepticism (and that he was not in on the Duchamp aspect of the show) with the now-infamous line about the lack of visual interest in Morris' work: "The understatement of these boxes is clear enough, and potentially interesting, but there isn't, after all, much to look at."[40] Morris must have been pleased. Judd the critic, and his peer, might not have fully grasped what was going on, but made the antiretinal point (inadvertently). For his own part, Morris would christen this strategy "aesthetic withdrawal" that same year.

Arakawa's work in *Boxing Match* elicited some surprising observations; and a few critics also saw the same details differently. Judd started his comments a little disparagingly. "Arakawa is a fairly literal Surrealist," he wrote in *Arts Magazine*. "A four-by-eight black box, with a lid, contains, laid out on pink silk, a bifurcated ray with a wide crest and a phallic tail of foam rubber, a body of cotton and three eyes which are lenses."[41] The *ArtNews* critic (K.L.) put it this way:

> Arakawa's boxes are elegant upright black coffins that reveal, when their lids are removed, accretions of cotton, concrete, and glass (with footprints and casts of feet and fingers) that become surprisingly real beings, resting on purple satin.[42]

Notably, this critic and Judd both address Arakawa's work almost purely descriptively. Yamaguchi goes further. Rather than our dismissing out of hand the connections he made between Morris and Arakawa, we have to assume that since he had visited both artists in their studios, that there was a grain of accuracy in his now-unfamiliar assertions. Perhaps Yamaguchi knew something then that has long since been lost. When one comes across a point that is insisted upon, however strange or unfamiliar it may be many decades later, quite often, it is a clue. Obviously it is neither useful nor convincing to forge superficial links to Duchampian ideas. What do we do with Arakawa's coffins (Fig. 10)?[43] Even if the notion

Fig. 10: Arakawa, *The Method of Advancing a Great Distance by Descending*, 1962. Wood, cement, cotton, plastic, electric light, 8 × 4 feet, installation view, *Boxing Match: 4 Sculptors: Arakawa, Ay-O, Morris, Yoshimura,* Gordon's Fifth Avenue Gallery

Fig. 11: Coffin-like Rigaud box for Un Air Embaumé perfume

Fig. 12: Marcel Duchamp, *Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette*, 1921. Perfume bottle with label in oval box 6 1/2 × 4 1/2 × 1 1/2 in. (16.5 × 11.4 × 3.8 cm.) Private Collection, Paris

of "passage" (mentioned above) may have been an aspect in the work of at least three of the four artists (excluding Ay-O)—in terms of death, the passage from this life to the next— this point is not quite satisfying. Likewise, the notion that they simply took Duchamp's reference to the "cemetery" ("of uniforms") in the lower, bachelor, part of *The Large Glass*, too literally.

If we leave the metaphysical and the purely speculative, another possibility is to consider the more idiosyncratic directions Duchamp took in his insistently variegated oeuvre; there is in fact a "coffin" form and language to corroborate it. An important element in the piece called *Belle Haleine, Eau de Voilette*, 1921, Duchamp's altered perfume bottle, is its box (Fig. 11, 12) in dark violet, distinctly coffin-shaped, cardboard. In fact, Arakawa's coffins, which at first look strange, or dated, approximate it closely enough to earn the comparison. Duchamp also often added phrases, one-liners, and other verbal glosses to his works. Beyond the *alterations* to the readymade—including the name Rrose Selavy, her initials, the Man Ray photograph of Duchamp in drag, and more—there is the phrase "un aire embaumé" (air perfumed or embalmed), and in the Lebel monograph: "un eau qui embaume."[44] Reflecting his conviction about the death of art in museums, Duchamp lined this box with satin.

Fig. 13: Arakawa, *Work*, 1963. Wood, old radio parts, mixed media concrete, cotton, fabric, fiberglass, plaster electrical wires. 82 × 48 × 12 1/2 in. (208.3 × 122 × 31.8 cm.)

Rather than abandoning an idea he had initiated six years earlier (in 1958), Arakawa took his coffin boxes in a new direction in New York, adding glass tubes, metal parts (like grills and drains), as well as drawings and diagrams penciled directly onto the sculptural surfaces inside. (Fig. 13) They also became more intricate functionally; he made them *work*, giving them illumination, electrical and mechanical functions. This development suggests that Arakawa was building the technical apparatus he gleaned from the elaborate and complex systems that went into Duchamp's *Glass*, even if he had not yet relinquished the earlier 'furniture' that had supported older ideas.[45] He exhibited a large group of these in a major solo show at the Zuni Gallery in Buffalo, New York, in 1964.[46]

The rise of themed group exhibitions (e.g. *Black, White, and Gray* or *Boxes*, both 1964) actually showed just how unresolved was the contemporary art landscape at this time. In all cases, the gallerist Virginia Dwan had already decided to represent Arakawa in 1963. She, and her director John Weber, included him in two group exhibitions at the Dwan Gallery Los Angeles in January and February of 1964, and gave him a solo show in April. The first exhibition was a brief "filler" of gallery artists. The second was the ambitious *Boxes* show—with around forty artists including Duchamp, Kurt Schwitters, Joseph Cornell, Rauschenberg, Morris, George Brecht, Oldenburg, and Warhol—conceived largely by Weber, with a catalogue text by Walter Hopps. "I would like for you to come to California during the latter part of February so that you will be able to see the Box [sic.] show," Weber wrote to Arakawa in January. "Your exhibition will open around the first of April."[47]

Arakawa had two works in the *Boxes* show, large coffin structures. Made within the last year or so, they still had the silk cushioning and the dark wood box frames seen in the entire series (since '58), but their content had been changing rather radically: "a new set of coffin works... contain[ing] long glass tubular rods arranged in organized rows, compartmentalized plexiglass structures, and an abundance of wires, switches, buzzers, and hinges."[48] *The Method of Advancing a Great Distance By Descending*, 1962, was 96 inches high. About half the height of the latter, the second piece, from 1963, was untitled.

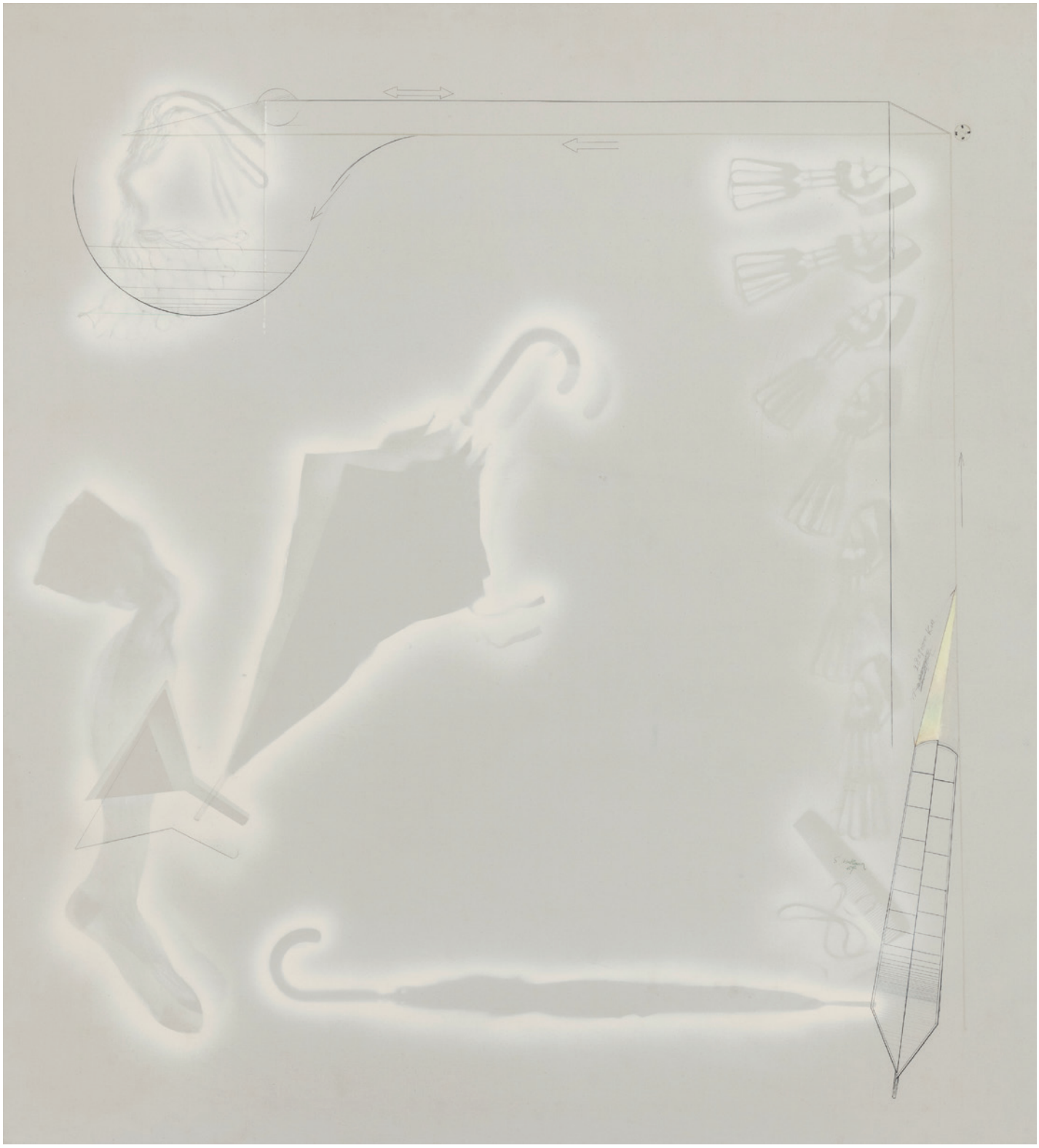


Fig. 14: Arakawa, *Untitled*, 1964. Acrylic, acrylic spray paint, pencil, pen, colored pencil, and collage on canvas 65 3/4 x 60 in. (167 x 152.4 cm.)

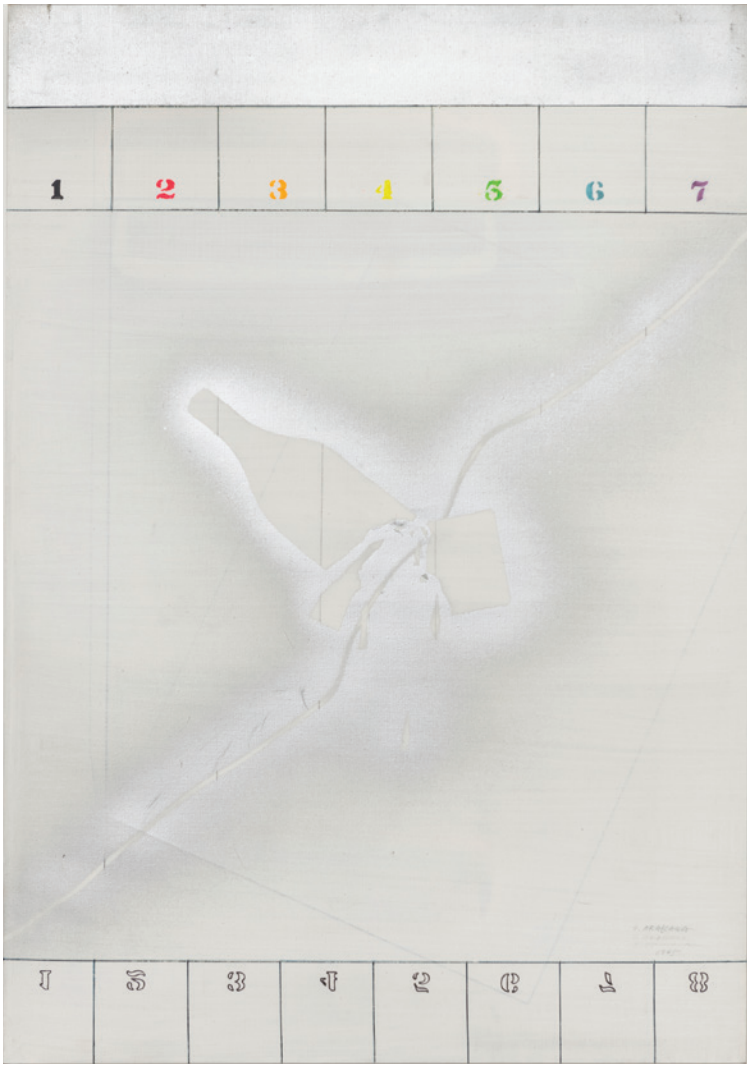


Fig. 15: Arakawa, *Untitled*, 1965. Acrylic, acrylic spray paint, colored pencil, and marker on canvas. 40 7/8 x 28 5/8 in. (103.9 x 72.7 cm.)

4.
CIRCUMSTANTIAL PAINTING:

The series of paintings Arakawa initiated in 1962 would launch him in the advanced art scenes in Los Angeles and New York. Some of the earliest are identifiable by their concrete, spray painted outlines of actual objects: an umbrella, a funnel, cords, breaking bottles, to which he added, progressively, actual objects, plus letters and numbers (Figs. 14–15). In placing the object directly onto the canvas, and then applying the white spray paint, Arakawa referred to methods of photography and reproduction, while producing a visual effect of something like anti-shadows. Initially painted in pure white or white plus a few light colors, they exude a strangeness that is at once paradoxical and difficult to articulate. At one level, the method supplies a good deal of the paintings' interest: resulting in a canvas charged up with what we might think of as radical rayographs made by other means.[49] Driven by a rethinking of the "concrete" state of the object, as an index, the negative object impressions were the result. The *support* (of this image field) often appears as a brighter white than would the canvas alone. The particulate matter of the spray paint that clings to the objects and the ground alike, is at once dusty and airy in its sheer luminosity, like a mineral that has been pulverized into powder. Highly unusual as a medium of art, the spray paint Arakawa chose, advanced his ideas about the presence/absence of the objects, and the circumstantial nature of their rendering. As he later said: "My medium is the area of perception created, located, and demonstrated by the combining (melting) of languages, systems into each other *in the same moving place*."[50]

If, for the sake of clarification, we were to juxtapose Arakawa's sprayed canvases with the *melting* "white painting" Richard Hamilton deployed in early post-Duchampian essays like *Hommage à Chrysler*

Fig. 16: Richard Hamilton, *Hommage à Chrysler Corp.*, 1957. Oil paint, metal foil, and digital print on wood Unconfirmed: 48 x 31.8 in. (81 x 122 cm.) Framed: 58 1/4 x 42 1/4 x 2 5/8 in. (147.9 x 107.4 x 6.7 cm.). Tate Britain, Purchased with assistance from the Art Fund and the Friends of the Tate Gallery, 1995

Corp., 1957 (Fig. 16), the situation—method and effect—reads as almost the reverse. Whereas Arakawa's 'ground' looks empty, with almost all the incident generated as figurative forms, Hamilton's highest toned white is scumbled, as if to leave it fluid. Smoky, cloudy, and painterly all at once, the expressive swath of white paint in *Hommage* seems impossible to contain within the space of the other forms partially described. It does not become part of the hints of architecture, or the outline of the woman. The brightest white, just behind her, draws in the spectator's attention. Hovering, amorphously, it generates the energy the painting exudes, a distinctly Pop dimension of desire and sex appeal of woman and commodity alike.[51] Arakawa's order, concreteness, and his voids, are quite opposite: photographic, and concerned with reproductions

Fig. 17: Arakawa, *In the Shadows There Are 180,000 Wet Lines*, 1964. Oil, pencil, colored pencil, marker, and compass on canvas. 63 x 85 1/2 in. (160 x 217.2 cm.)

that differ from the originals. To speak structurally about the painting models of Hamilton and Arakawa, we could call them *schematic*. Hamilton's has been given an even more precise definition: "tabular."[52] The word that will emerge for Arakawa's painting is "diagrammatic." In both cases, the structures are organized by a matrix conceived specifically for the work's objects and ideas. Yet the table/tabular and the diagram/diagrammatic also share something at the level of function. They derive, essentially, from statistics, and they create an *at a glance* model of a more complex set of relations. What they draw upon in Duchamp are the primary adumbrations of *both* the tabular and diagrammatic in the painting *Tu m'*, 1918 (Fig. 18) and ultimately in *The Large Glass*, 1915–23, (Fig. 19).

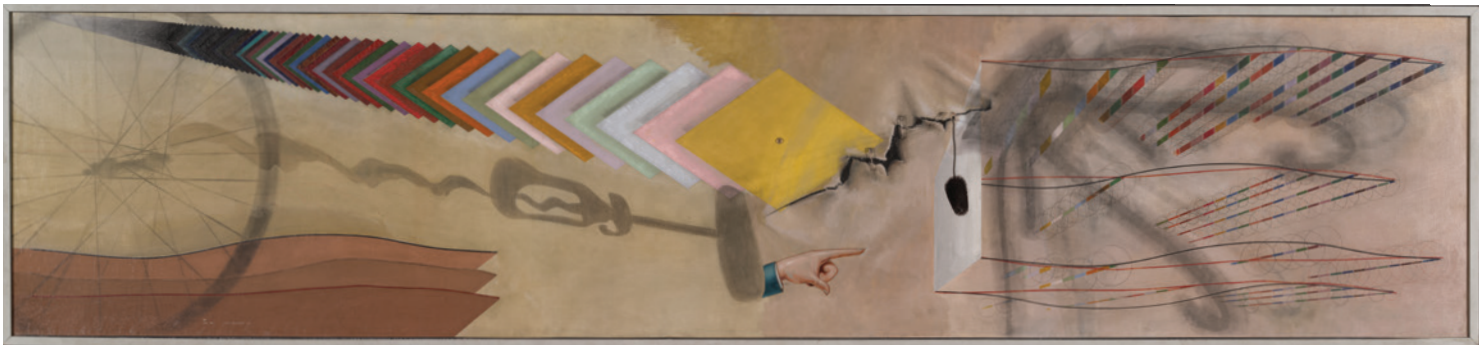


Fig. 18: Marcel Duchamp, *Tu m'*, 1918. Oil on canvas, with bottlebrush, safety pins, and bolt. 27 1/2 x 119 5/16 in. (69.8 x 303 cm.) Framed: 28 3/4 x 124 1/4 x 2 1/4 in. (73 x 315.6 x 5.7 cm.). Yale University of Art Gallery. Gift of the Estate of Katherine S. Drier

An imprint, a photograph, with or without a camera, the outline of an object placed on paper (or canvas) and sprayed with paint; all are indexical processes, which also reproduce the subject/object. If the body creates the mark, the index, the mind takes or makes an impression. All of these mechanisms are crucial in Arakawa's project. Notably, in the early paintings circles and circular forms recur. (Fig. 17, 20) If many are 'perfect' enough to disclose their having been made, not freehand, but with the aid of compasses, this, in turn, points to Arakawa's probable source as the Lebel monograph. There we find reference to a moment when Duchamp became fascinated by Wassily Kandinsky's experiments 'drawing' with the aid of a ruler and compasses. He put this into practice in his painting *Tu m'*. At the upper right of the field, multi-colored, quasi-filmic, ribbons extend from an undular, Stoppage-like matrix, in straight, diagonal lines, lightly encircled. Lebel's explanation is significant here to the extent that it reflects elements explored by Arakawa and his peers: reorienting painting (or art) away from the retinal by addressing other senses; the turn to *devices* to make a work (usually a painting) more neutral; the emphasis on sources of stored, if not pent-up energy, which parallels sexual energy on the one hand, and the "electricity" that courses through everything (above all the *Glass*) on the other. Lebel manages to bring this full-circle (no pun intended) and connect the resultant forms to the thematic of stored energy. He explains:

Fig. 19: Marcel Duchamp, T*he Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)*, 1915-23. Oil, varnish, lead foil, lead wire, and dust on two glass panels. 109 1/4 x 70 x 3 3/8 in. (277.5 x 177.8 x 8.6 cm.). Philadelphia Museum of Art: Bequest of Katherine S. Drier, 1952, 1952-98-1

> ... a hand executed by a sign painter (with the signature A. Klang) points to the right at the shadow of the hat-rack closing its claws on the more or less artificial lines which, Duchamp says, were plotted with a pair of compasses and recall the shapes of the *Stoppages*. [... Other] lines branch out in diagonals divided into brilliant colors while a multitude of circles, *sometimes shaped like springs*, coil around each of the lines.[53]

Lebel adds that these methods recall those of Kandinsky, citing Duchamp on the subject: "In tracing his lines with ruler and compass, Kandinsky opened to the spectator a new way of looking at painting. It was no more lines of the subconscious but a deliberate condemnation of the emotional; *a clear transfer of thought on canvas*."[54]

Fig. 20: Arakawa, *Untitled*, 1963. Oil, acrylic, acrylic spray paint, pencil, and colored pencil on canvas 71 3/4 x 66 in. (182.2 x 167.7 cm.)

The choice of objects and the multifaceted projections that define Arakawa's paintings 1961–62 through 1965, reveal him attending to the graphic details of this Duchampian protocol:

> To lose the possibility of identifying/recognizing
> 2 similar objects—
> 2 colors, 2 laces
> 2 hats, 2 forms whatsoever
> To reach the Impossibility of
> Sufficient ^visual memory,
> to transfer /from one
> like object to another
> the memory imprint…".[55]

We can imagine the young artist attending enthusiastically to the challenge here glossed, in reverse, by colors and laces, hats, and the index of that which is grasped visually and by memory. In the sprayed paintings, there are not only feet and circles that resonate beyond the surface, but cords that flicker with electric energy, and slacken into the form of laces, glance by glance, and the umbrellas he would privilege going forward. Duchamp's parasols and sieves become Arakawa's umbrellas and funnels.[56] A key example of all this is in his 'Untitled' painting of 1964-65 (Fig. 21) with the blue umbrella on the inside panel and a silver umbrella laid along the top edge. This same painting appears, behind Arakawa, in a photograph taken at 112 Chambers Street when Morris had stopped by. This image of the two artists (Fig. 22)—chatting in their work clothes, surrounded by tools—reverses the situation with which we started, with Arakawa entering the studio when it was Morris'. Now, in the background, behind Morris, two of the spray painted canvases, including two similar whites, lean against the wall.

The special attributes of the compasses, do not stop at the facilitation of the perfect circle, or other undulating forms, they also plot out distance on maps. It is no coincidence, then, that Arakawa would turn to the blueprint in 1965. This function of replication, via an instrument, elaborated upon Duchamp's consistent involvement with the idea from his *Coffee Mill*, 1911—whose importance as the frontispiece in Lebel, is as "a blueprint of movement".[57] The latter phrase is from the Janises essay in which the blueprint comes up more than once. From here, they become more precise about Duchamp's mappings:

> Aiming nine shots at a given point, these formed a polygram as a result of variation in the aim-control and accompanying conditions. He then converted the flat polygram or *floor plan* into an elevation plan. Here the nine points became the locations for the nine malic forms in perspective.[58]

This protocol of *conversions*, from floor plan to elevation plan is diagrammed across several pages in Hamilton's Green Box notes. It is thus no surprise that *floorplans reoriented* are taken up by several artists circa 1963–65 (Fig. 23), and also show up in Arakawa's paintings (Fig. 24). We will return to this with his blueprints, as of 1965, which are conceptually aligned with the floor plans and diagrams.

Fig. 21: Arakawa, 'Untitled', 1964–65. Acrylic, acrylic spray paint, pencil, colored pencil, photomechanical print, wooden board, umbrella, and funnel on canvas. 81 x 63 in. (205.7 x 160 cm.)

Fig. 22: Arakawa and Robert Morris at 112 Chambers Street, 1963

Fig. 23: James Rosenquist, *Doorstop*, 1963. Oil on canvas with light bulbs. 60 1/8 x 83 7/8 x 16 3/4 in. (152.6 x 213 x 42.5 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mrs. Armand P. Bartos Fund (by exchange) and gift of Agnes Gund, 1996

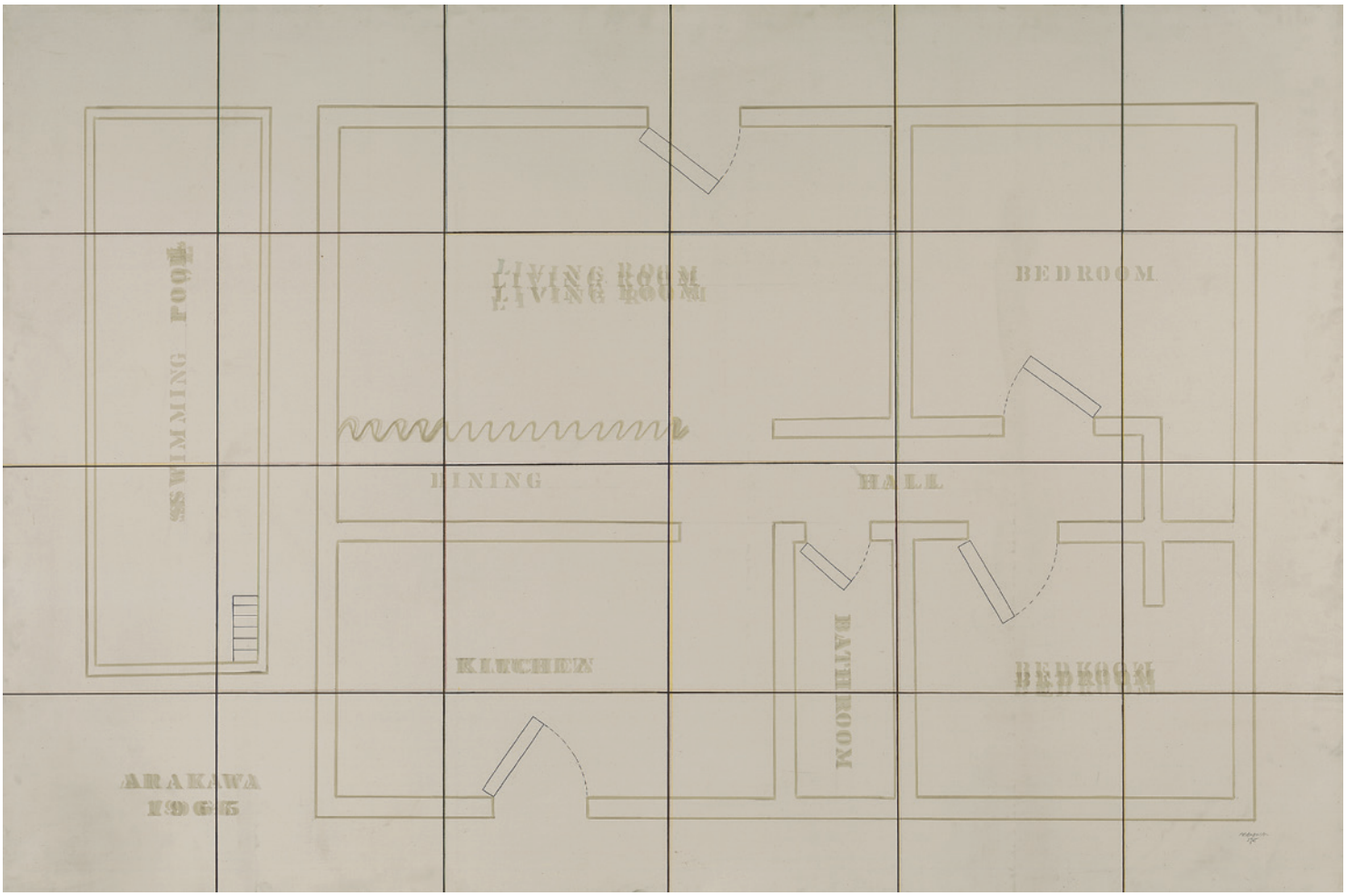


Fig. 24: Arakawa, *The Diagram of Part of Imagination*, 1965. Oil, enamel spray, and pencil on canvas. 62 3/16 x 91 5/16 in. (158 x 232 cm.). Pinault Collection

5.
THE DIAGRAM

Di.a.gram:
noun
a simplified drawing showing the appearance, structure, or workings of something; a schematic representation

Geometry: a figure composed of lines that is used to illustrate a definition or statement or to aid the proof of a proposition

verb
represent (something) in graphic form

ORIGIN
Early 17th century: from Latin *diagramma*, from Greek, from *diagraphein 'mark out by lines'* from *dia* 'through' + *graphein* 'write'

To address the extensive body of diagrammatic works, which are their own subset of Arakawa's oeuvre—perhaps even more substantial and numerous than the term "subset" permits—we need to consider what it means to paint the diagram, and the very definition of the diagram itself. This is a knotty set of issues before we have even entered the field. Let us start by asking a few more or less pressing questions. How would we parse the principal traits of the diagram? Should we privilege its core function of summarizing and condensing vast amounts of otherwise unmanageable data? Following from this, could we say that the diagram is extra-referential and non-autonomous, as opposed to self-contained or self-sufficient? When identified in terms of its use, the diagram is of course, inextricably tied to a given set of referents; necessarily so, if it is to function at all. Another characterization would start with a basic formal—that is to say structural—description. But of course a diagram in the context of art is another thing entirely. What

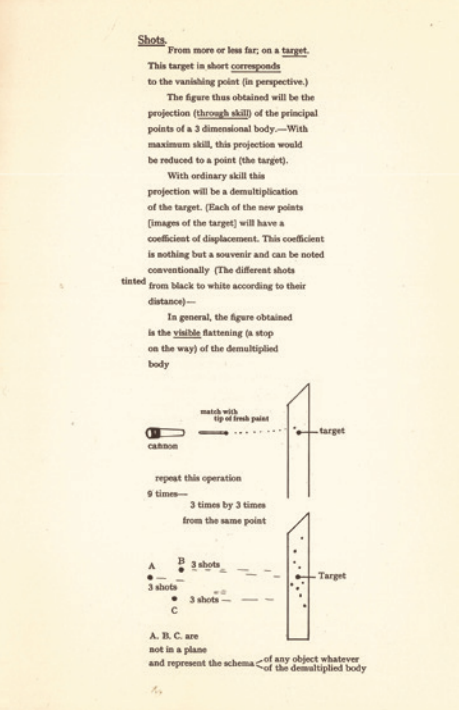


Fig. 25: Marcel Duchamp, page from *La mariée mis a nu par ses célibataire, même*, from *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*: a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box

Fig. 26: Jasper Johns, *Target with Plaster Casts*, 1955. Encaustic and collage on canvas and wood with objects. 52 x 44 1/4 in. (132.1 x 112.4 cm.)

use is a formal rendering of an actual diagram? And yet, in the definition above there are numerous terms that (also) belong to art.

When Arakawa took up the diagram he knew he was advancing toward a particular threshold: the line that separates function and art, or the thing (the object?) and its representation. Choosing the diagram as the matrix of one's art—painting, no less—while still needing it to function, to have openings for the spectator/perceiver, was a tall order. Were function not needed, would it not just be a *representation* of a diagram [a collage, painting, or drawing]? And vice versa: wouldn't we have to say that a diagram rendered functional by an artist is not a

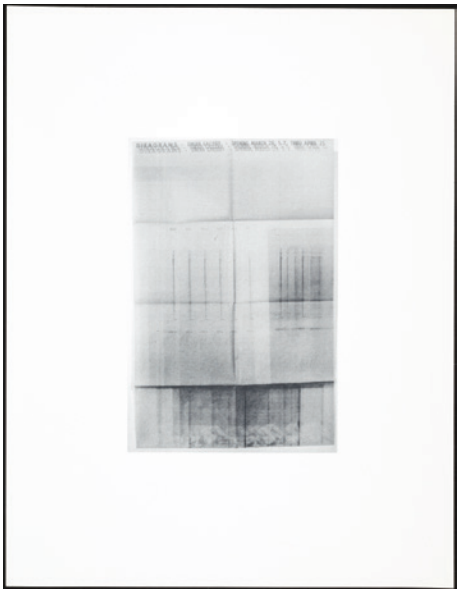


Fig. 27: Poster for *Arakawa: Dieagrams* at Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, 1964

work of art? In relation to the abstract painting of advanced modernism, our object is the diametric opposite; celebrated as the former has long been for attending to the logic of pure medium, and for having achieved ultimate self-reflexivity, autoreferentiality, and autonomy. This is of course our subject, the *problem* (to put it in Arakawa-like terms) we are given to confront. The moment this object is considered art we enter the realm of non-function, the base criterion of art. Wasn't that the crux of the Duchampian readymade?

On these questions, it is worth a quick pause to offer another significant comparison—like the Arakawa-Hamilton *whites*—in order to illuminate further the function/non-function 'problem'. It is instructive here to compare Arakawa's diagram with Johns' target; both forms loom large in the Duchamp notes. The latter includes drawings and notation specifically featuring targets, the angle of the shots taken, the pattern of the resulting marks, etc. (Fig. 25).[59] Yet if Duchamp's target practice uses a little paint, Johns' 'image' is all painting (Fig. 26). At most, his targets oscillate from sign to image and back. In fact, Johns' field is no less "all-over painting" than that of the previous generation for which this term was coined. Thus, it is non-function, pure and simple; we do not spend

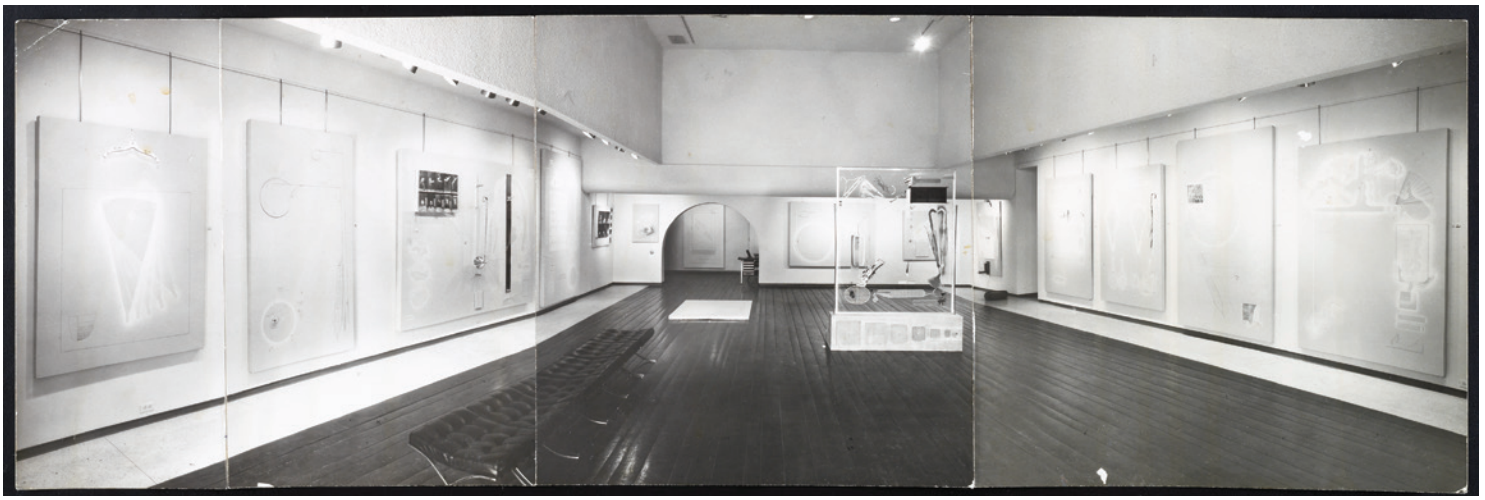


Fig. 28: Exhibition view of *Arakawa: Dieagrams*, Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, March 29, 1964

time thinking about its use. Johns is a painter of readymade matrices, he expands Duchamp's virtual field with its nine points of paint, into a space of total painting. In contrast, the *open* diagrams of Arakawa place palpable zones of white, breathing space, if you will. This makes the spectator feel they still have a point of entry, that the artist hasn't decided everything for them.

It was Arakawa's conceit to call the Los Angeles show *Dieagrams*. It was announced with a classic, or classically hip Dwan poster (Fig. 27), mylar-faced, with Rauschenberg-style transfer images, including a swimsuit-clad woman as the protagonist of the total image.[60] The reflective surface was desirable. Arakawa had become interested in connecting—if not suturing—the subject/spectator to the compositions he created, making space for unpredictable points of interest and/or cathexis. The walls of Dwan's vast new (architect built) gallery in Los Angeles, held the developing series of white diagram paintings with aplomb, and reinforcement, like another support (Fig. 28). Elegant and quiet, the installation space buffered the silence of the spare diagram paintings. If the newness of the diagram landed as a perplexing void for a public not at all attuned to the strategy of aesthetic withdrawal

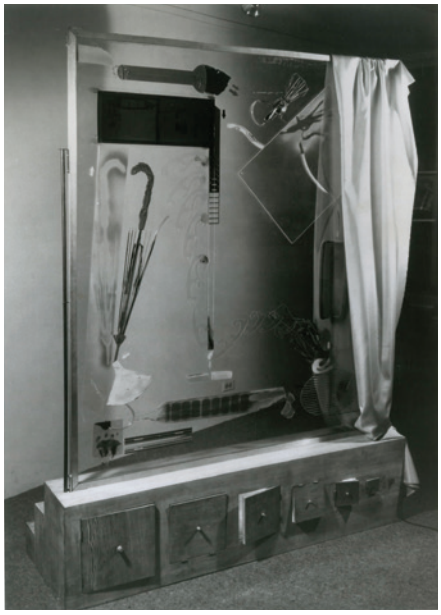


Fig. 29: Arakawa, *Diagram with Duchamp's Glass as a Minor Detail*, 1964. Mixed media. 90 9/16 x 66 1/8 x 22 in. (230 x 168 x 57 cm.). Nagoya City Art Museum

(as Morris put it) or "cervelites" ("brain facts" in Duchamp's neologism), this void would be counteracted in language. The titles for the diagrammatic paintings were brimming with excess, with a minimum of five words, and a maximum of forty-two.[61] This *ratio* in itself is an indication of Arakawa's developing interest in disclosing the inadequacies or merely the incommensurability of language(s): visual, verbal, or other. "Language is no damned good," Duchamp apparently said. In the face of Arakawa's titles we might easily reverse this, and put the lack in the realm of (the) art.

John Weber was surely in on the Duchampian subtext when he and Arakawa agreed on the focal point of the show. In the center of the space was the only three-dimensional work, and, in a sense, the skeleton key to the whole, *Diagram with Duchamp's Glass as a Minor Detail*, 1964 (Fig. 29). As Oedipal as the "minor detail" may at first sound, this actual glass—in the same vertical rectangular form as *La mariée mise a nu par ses célibataires*, 1915–23—was like a dictionary (if not a thesaurus) of Duchampian terms, concepts, and propositions. It was also a veritable catalogue of the forms in which Arakawa's Duchampianism would metamorphose into his own vocabulary. The

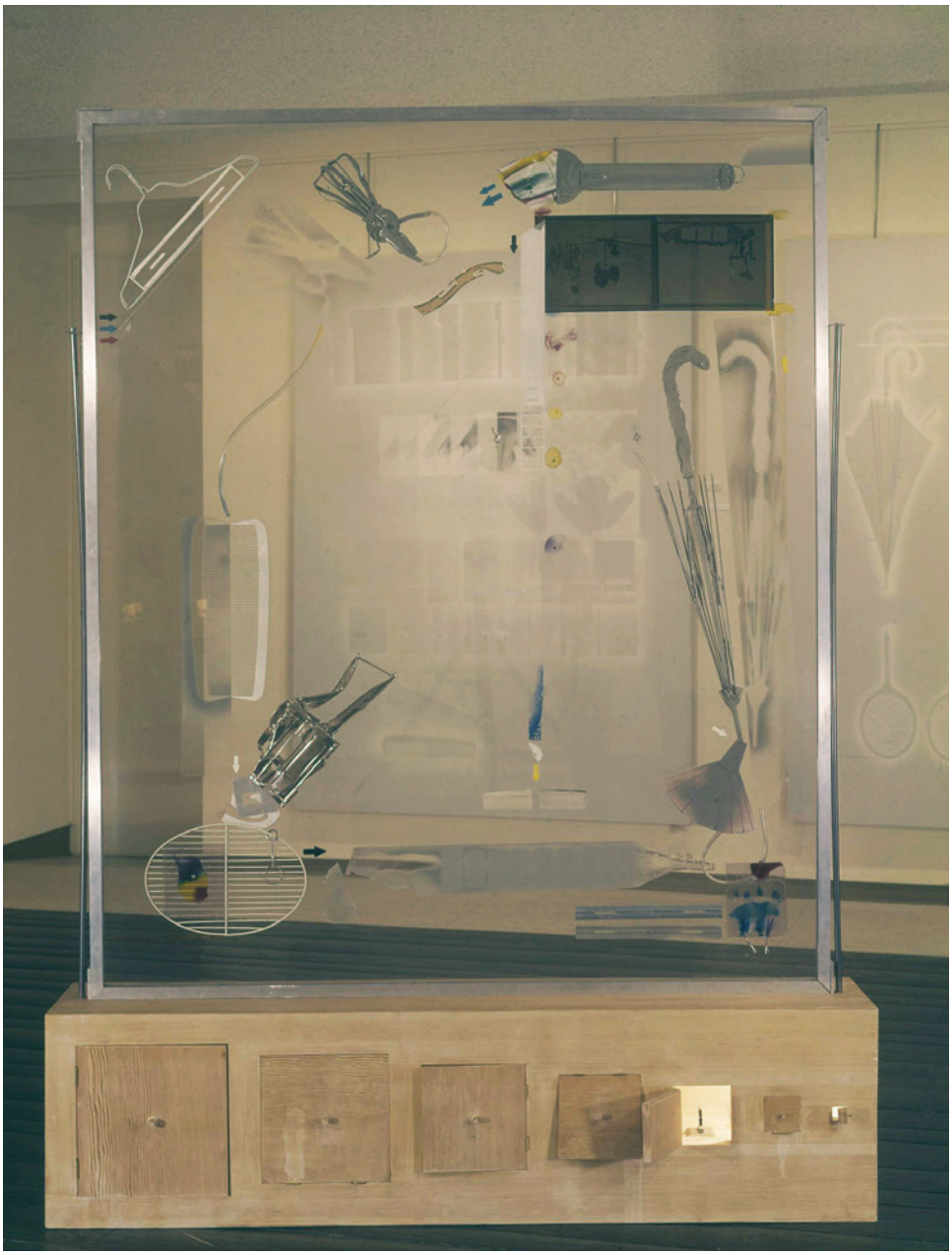


Fig. 30: Arakawa, *Diagram with Duchamp's Glass as a Minor Detail*, 1964. Mixed media. 90 9/16 x 66 1/8 x 22 in. (230 x 168 x 57 cm.). Nagoya City Art Museum

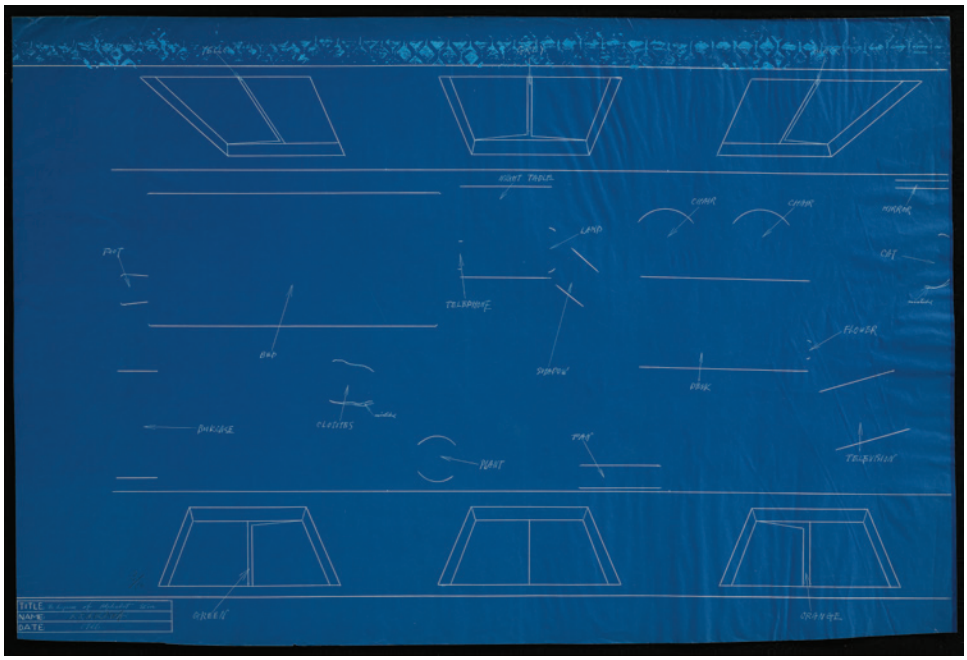


Fig. 31: Arakawa, *The Diagram of Alphabet Skin*, 1966. Blueprint on paper. 24 x 36 in. (60.9 x 91.4 cm.). Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Gift of Virginia Dwan, 1994

color image makes certain elements clearer. For instance, the "squares" at the base seem to desire a rapport with the shapes in the top (cloud) section of the *Large Glass* that Duchamp dubbed "variations on the square." Arakawa's three-dimensional interpretation of the "squares," at ground level, lit from behind —if not hinge geometry—as doors that could be opened and closed (Fig. 30).[62] In the glass itself there are the two umbrellas, two combs (another MD note), hooks, filaments, flashlights, cords, and an egg-beater, of all things, that is a replica of the one Man Ray used in 1918 as the *Homme [Man]* in his gendered pair of found object photographs.[63] The "minor" footnote to Duchamp was in the upper right of Arakawa's glass. There, the *Large Glass* is replicated but unsettlingly reoriented: top and bottom are now side by side.[64] Arakawa had this work photographed in another space, very theatrically, with spotlights on distinct sections, even single elements, from both sides. The result, which now appears as an uncanny combination

of *Tu m'* and the *Large Glass*, was no doubt scintillatingly interesting to Arakawa. Among the many reasons the artist was indebted to Dwan, in this case, was that she (insightfully) chose to hire John D. Schiff to photograph Arakawa's alternate display of his own glass; Schiff was best known for his indelible 1942 image of Duchamp's *Mile of String* (a three-dimensional diagram if ever there was one).[65]

In March 1965, Arakawa told Weber that he had begun making a series of works based on blueprints.[66] On Chambers Street, a block or so from where he was living, was New York's City Hall. He wrote with enthusiasm, having walked down his street and found, outside the municipal buildings, boxes containing piles of discarded blueprints. He made a number of works from these. *The Diagram of Alphabet Skin* (Fig. 31) extended the floor plan, *via* the elevation view, floating the two at once. Arakawa would use the blueprint 'concept'—in fact, the poster/announcement—for his next show with Dwan in New York, 1966, which Duchamp attended (Fig. 32). In terms of his own project, the blueprint—as a direct contact, cameraless technique (originally invented to reproduce technical drawings)—extended his spray paint works of (Man Ray-style) object impressions. This much said, the idea of a medium of reproduction created to reproduce, not artful photographic subjects, or artistic sketches, but engineering and architectural drawings, is *perfectly Duchampian* in concept, but rather beguiling as a prospect for art. Like the older artist's experimentation with ideas of business cards, letterhead, and other 'official' modes of the corporate, mass produced signature, Arakawa explored the use in art of what on blueprints are called "title plates." He adopted these boxy, multi-celled panels (for the ID, date, and the name of the designer/firm, etc.), usually at the bottom right of the sheet of paper, for his own information. Some works featured just these title plates alone, as if to expand the abstraction of the identification panel, sending individuality further down the rabbit hole of reproduction *ad infinitum*.

A final question concerning the blueprint is: what is its relation to the diagram? Both refer outward beyond themselves, directing us to a larger reality. Expanding the reach of the diagrammatic into the 'reality' of the spectator, and drawing on more of the world, would be Arakawa's next task. This returns us to the one-off Duchamp, mentioned at the

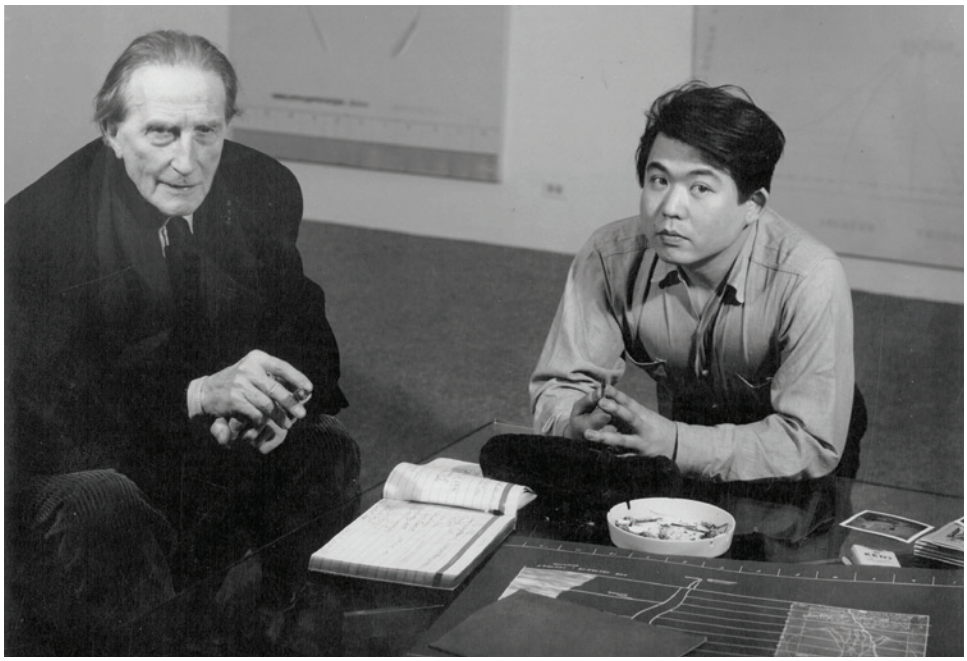


Fig. 32: Marcel Duchamp and Arakawa at the Dwan Gallery, New York, 1966

outset, his *Unhappy Readymade*, which was described in the Janis essay in *The Dada Painters and Poets*.[67] This work begins to answer the most difficult of problems of how to expand the diagram out into real time and real space. In terms that seem especially apt for Arakawa (and Gins), David Joselit writes that the *Unhappy Readymade* orchestrates encounters between languages (visual and textual), which recur throughout the artist's oeuvre. Duchamp designed it, notes Joselit, "as a catalyst whose physical form would disappear into the various visual and textual reverberations it provoked."

> Duchamp presses the science of description up against the aleatory nature of events. [...] Yet in his conceptual universe, there can be no desublimation without a countervailing moment of abstraction designed to throw it into relief (the 'nonsensical' nature of the problem is only visible if the problem emerges.) Consequently, in the sole representation of this work over which Duchamp

exerted control—the photograph included in his *Boite [en valise]*—he introduced both diagrams and blocks of explanatory text into the picture made of grid of broken lines. He added these details to make the weather's disorderly diagram collide more forcefully with geometry's universal abstraction."[68]

One could argue that the *Unhappy Readymade*, is a three-dimensional diagram. Maybe it is four-dimensional, due to its unfolding in and through *duration*. Although it is a one-off in Duchamp's oeuvre, and more a work set up to complete itself, than for the spectator to complete, one cannot help thinking it must have been instructive for Arakawa. In the collision of abstract mathematics, geometric forms, and equations, with concrete outside effects (the elements), it mobilizes incommensurable things with such unassailable certainty, and so matter-of-factly, that the concept and its realization—*that* it was actually realized—cannot but maintain its stimulating provocation.

6.
RESEARCH & THE SPECTATOR: *THE MECHANISM OF MEANING*

The arbitrariness of language is emphasized by its sudden spatialization.
—Lawrence Alloway.[69]

The major project that Arakawa and Gins undertook between 1963 and 1973, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, could be understood as a philosophical elaboration on Duchamp's focusing of the spectator position vis à vis the work of art. Too often simplified, when lifted from his 1957 lecture

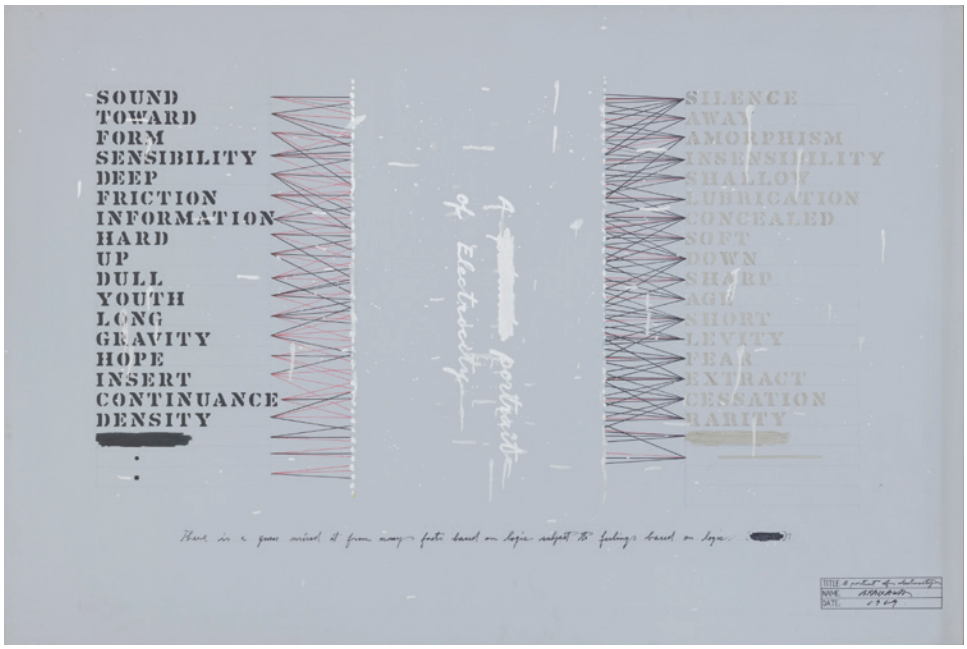


Fig. 33: Arakawa, *A Portrait of Electricity*, 1969. Acrylic, pencil, and marker on canvas. 48 x 72 in. (122 x 182.9 cm.)

"The Creative Act" —*the spectator completes the work*—his seeming promotion of the subject could easily be taken piecemeal or completely misunderstood. With this, Duchamp also parsed and qualified the artist's relative input with reference to the "art coefficient."[70] Duchamp evoked "electricity" in the projection of creativity as entering a field with "two poles": the artist and the spectator.[71] Arakawa takes this up in his 1969 *Portrait of Electricity* (Fig. 33). And the Duchampian notion of giving "the attributes of a medium to the artist" is essentially what Arakawa signs onto when he says his *medium* is not paint/painting. But if the artist takes up that intermediary/mediating role—ultimately, for Duchamp, the realistic position—they cannot conceive of their authorial function in the same way ever again. Duchamp was of course speaking mainly of expressive, and what he called retinal art. Arakawa seems to have

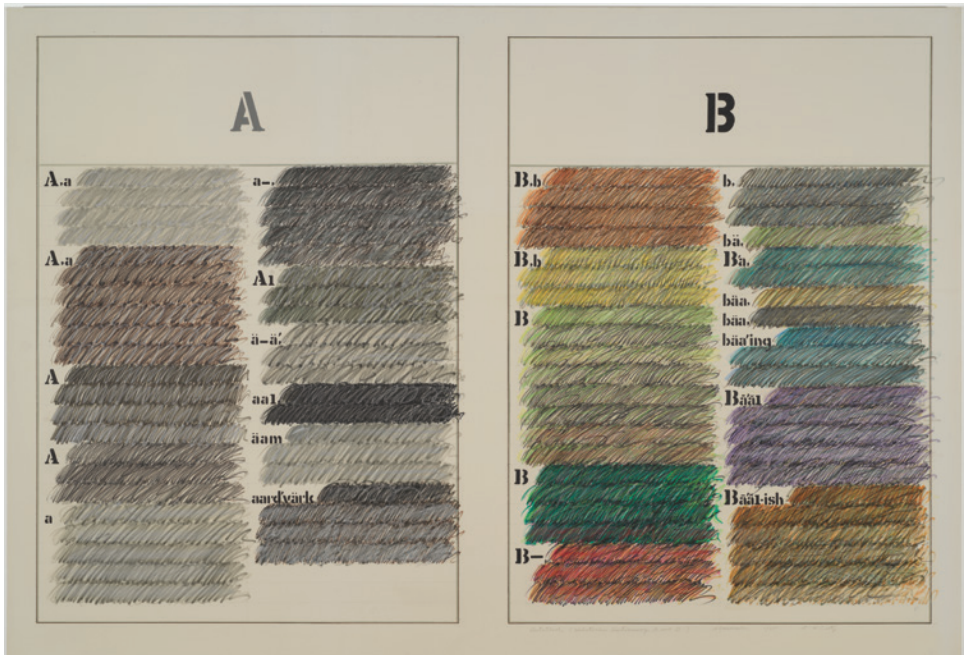


Fig. 34: Arakawa, *Untitled (Webster's Dictionary A & B)*, 1965–1966. Acrylic, pen, and marker on canvas 66 x 96 in. (167.6 x 243.8 cm.)

attended to the prognoses of this text carefully. The fields dominated by blank, the color swatches, the stenciled letters (Fig. 34) leading up to and including in "The Mechanism of Meaning" suspending the signifiers in an *unfulfilled* state, awaiting consummation in/as meaning by another: *The passage from artist(s) to spectator(s)*. One panel from the chapter titled "The Splitting of Meaning," features an image of an 'old master' painting of a female protagonist falsely identified as the Mona Lisa (Fig. 35). This notion of splitting recalls the Freudian *spaltung*, a division in the subject, typically in two parts, two personalities, which cease to affect each other; they exist almost independently. Arakawa and Gins seem to want to introduce a primal rupture of this intensity into the subject's encounter with their work, as two systems of *meaning making* collide.[72]

Fig. 35: Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning: 7. Splitting of Meaning*, 1963–1971, 78, 88, 96. Acrylic, oil, and photo-printed canvas on canvas. 96 x 68 in. (243.8 x 172.7 cm.)

The Mechanism of Meaning initiates the project of putting the artwork's emphasis on the spectator, it prefigures or begins developing the [paradox of the] cerebral-phenomenological basis of their project.[73] At roughly the same moment, Arakawa's peers, George Brecht (Figs. 36, 37) and Robert Morris (Fig. 38), were moving to position the perceiver physically in space, as he would as well in the "Place" part of *The Mechanism of Meaning* (Fig. 39). Morris and Arakawa would take this even further in the decades ahead, both creating ramps and other incursions into the whole of the spectatorial space (Figs. 40–43). The functions with which Duchamp had wanted to charge up his object-concepts can be enumerated. It was these, rather than any literal, one-to-one echo, that fueled the imagination and 'research' of so many young artists in the 1960s. Duchamp was the model of the "research artist"—the modus operandi that so appealed to Arakawa and Gins. If the *Unhappy Readymade* appeared compelling as a first step—if not an outrageous leap—into the field of the diagrammatic, offering a sense of its potential and scope; the next logical move, perhaps, would be to see what one could make of the proposition like this in one's own here and now. Of course, we are no longer speaking just of Arakawa. Indeed it becomes more and more apparent that most of the artists who came to the fore in the 1960s used Duchamp's *Green Box* notes like so many individual scores. The great challenge was to execute enough of his speculative instructions to understand what he was doing with (semantic) relationships, the scope of their extraordinary conceptual import, and the radical implications for "Art"—Duchamp liked to capitalize the word—then, ideally, see what to do next. In a posthumous letter to Duchamp, as a tribute on the occasion of his 1973 retrospective, Arakawa contributed a scrappy page, with canceled text, which he asked to be published exactly as is (Fig. 44).

Dear Rrose Selavy, Dear Marcel,
Even so, a line is a crack.
Who comes to visit once the possibility of
recognizing two and a half similar
objects has been lost??
Where would (does) the possibility of
Recognizing two and a half similar objects go?[74]

Fig. 36: George Brecht, *Five Places*, 1963. Envelope with rubber stamp additions, containing five offset cards. Card each: 1 x 1 9/16 (2.6 x 4 cm); overall (envelope): 2 3/16 x 3 9/16 in. (5.6 x 9 cm). Producer: George Maciunas. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

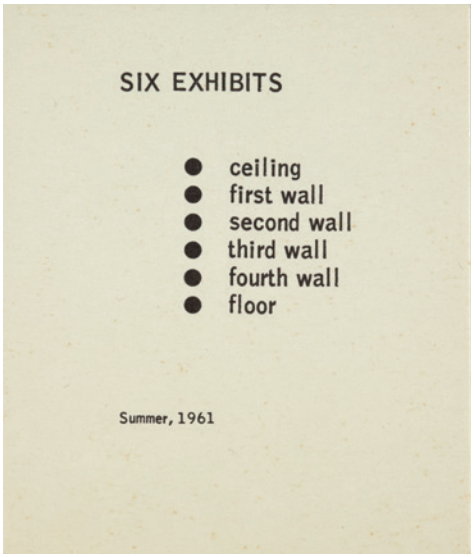


Fig. 37: George Brecht, *Six Exhibits* (included in the collection published by Fluxus, *Water Yam*), 1963 Offset card from cardboard box with offset label, containing sixty-nine offset cards. 3 1/16 x 2 5.8 in. (7.8 x 6.7 cm.). The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Fig. 38: Robert Morris, *Location*, 1962–63. Oil on panel with mechanical counters. 20 1/8 x 20 1/8 in. (51.2 x 51.2 cm.). Tate Modern, London; Presented by the American Fund for the Tate Gallery, courtesy of the Richard B. Fisher Endowment 2010

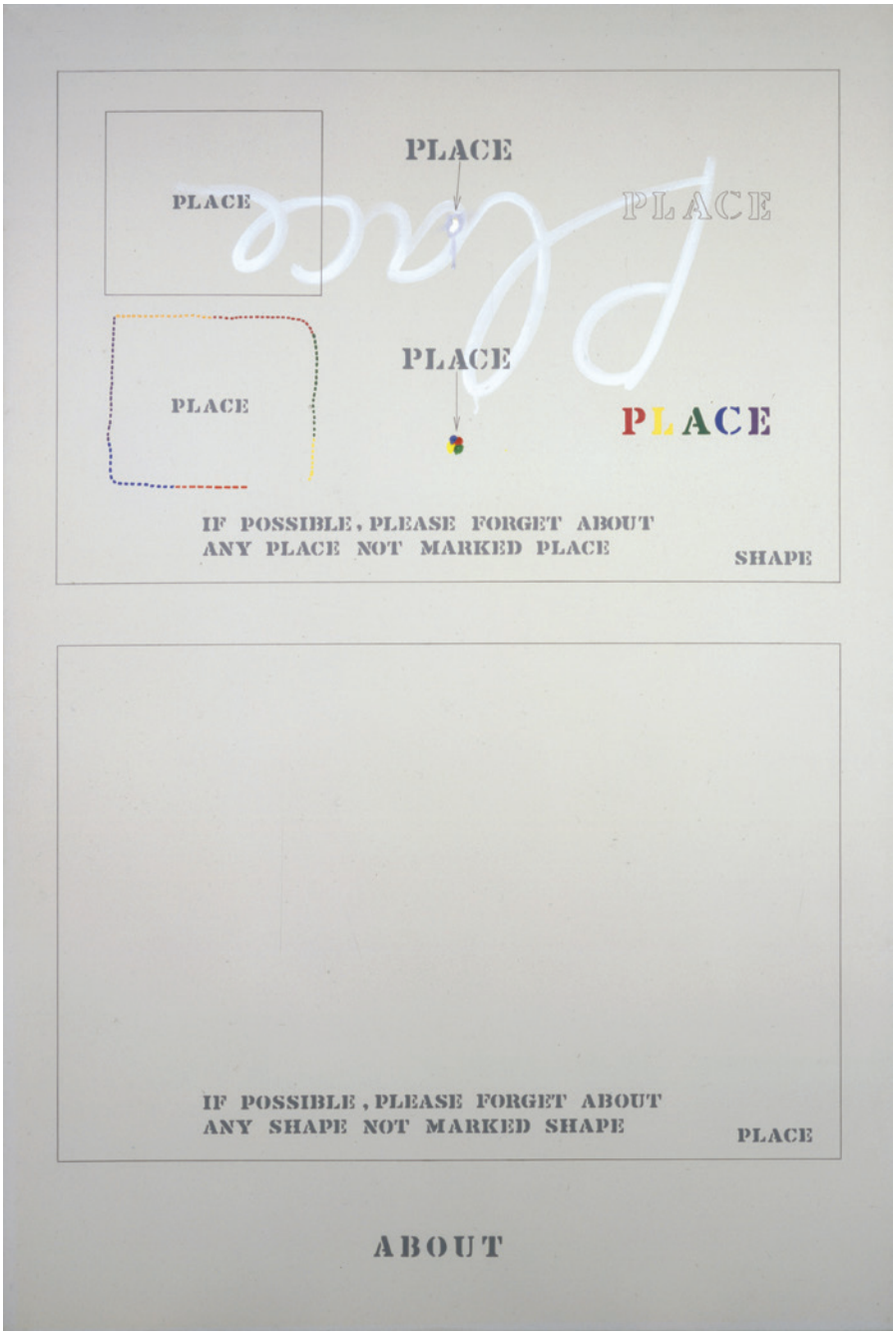


Fig. 39: Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning: I5. Meaning of Intelligence*, 1963–1971, 78, 88, 96. Acrylic on canvas. 96 x 68 in. (243.8 x 172.7 cm.)

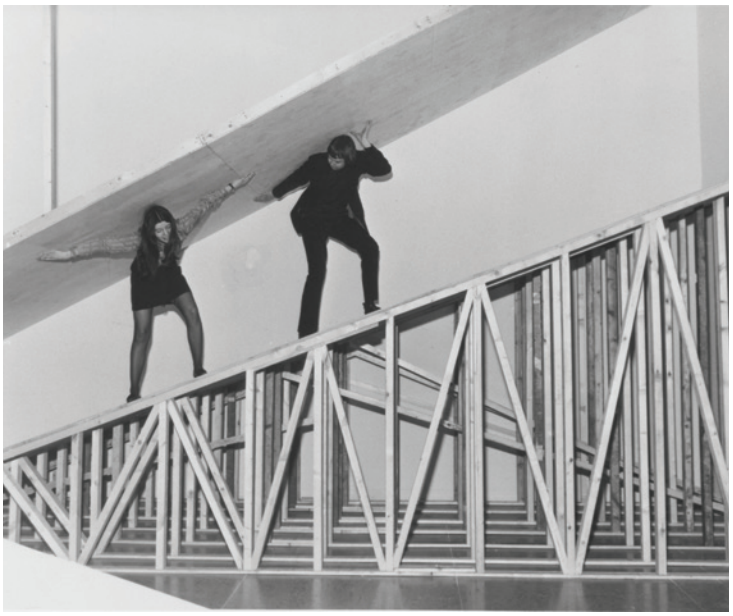


Fig. 40: Robert Morris, *Bodyspacemotionthings,* Interactive installation, Tate Gallery, London, 1971

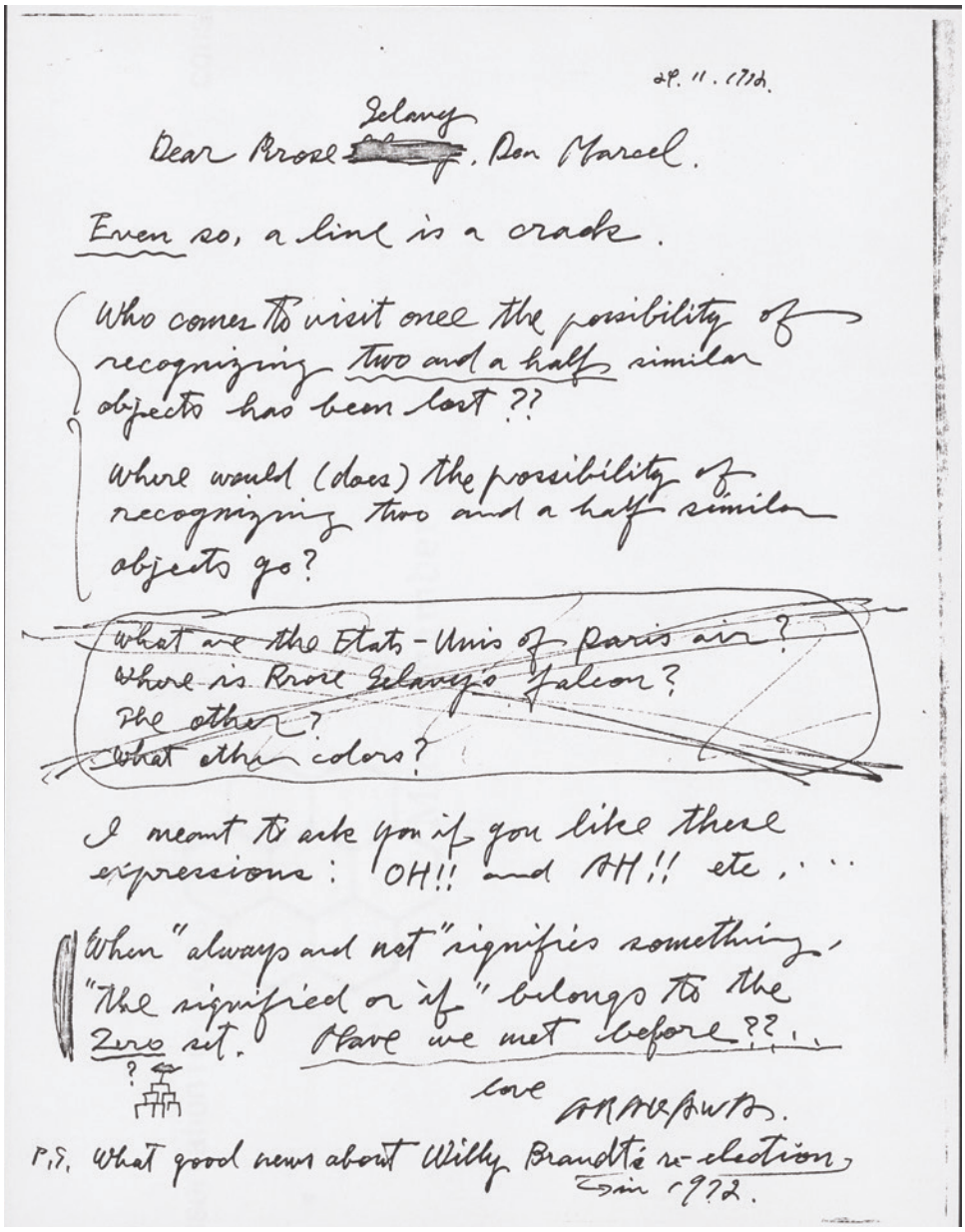
Fig. 41: Robert Morris, *Bodyspacemotionthings,* Interactive installation, Tate Gallery, London, 1971

Fig. 42: Arakawa, *Painting for Closed Eyes*, 1989 Installation. Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, October–November 1990

Fig. 43: Arakawa, *Painting for Closed Eyes*, 1989 Installation. Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, October–November 1990

Having brought back the image of the line that became a crack (Fig. 45), or several, he extended the *two similar things* to two-and-a-half. Arakawa then went on to mention two Duchampian touchstones in the arc of his own oeuvre: "Where is Rrose Selavy's falcon (sic.—flacon)?" That perfume bottle and its case, which came to Arakawa at the beginning; while he was still in Japan. And, "What other colors?"—spectrum... food (lemon)...other examples? White reflects all." This last array picks up on Duchamp's conversion of (aesthetic) taste to the more literal, sensory version. So yellow became "Lemon" and, following his elder's instruction to "take a Larousse," Arakawa put his diagrammatic model to work, across many works. In the future-facing fate of the crack, and the word play in *A Portrait of Electricity*, one is tempted to think of Arakawa and Gins' Reversible Destiny, as a conversion of his Reversible Density.

Arakawa's achievement (with Gins) in *The Mechanism of Meaning* was to get to the point of transitioning between the notes themselves, as instances, idea by idea, to accede to handling their 'big picture' logic, their *raison d'etre* within the project of "putting art once again at the service of the mind," as Duchamp said. Inextricable from this was the inclusion of the spectator as prospective participant in this *logic* of multisystemic meaning production. Where the artist left off, the work of the spectator would begin. The other part of this logic was to reveal how the artist's process and concept, all of their notes, would always exceed the details that surfaced on the aesthetic plane; in Duchamp's case, the ultimate details that made it into the *Glass*. His system was larger. The system always is. In other words, the *Glass* was the summary of the expanded field; it was the diagram.



28. 11. 1972.

Dear Roxie Delaney, Don Marcel.

Even so, a line is a crack.

Who comes to visit once the possibility of recognizing two and a half similar objects has been lost ??

Where would (does) the possibility of recognizing two and a half similar objects go?

~~What are the Etats-Unis of Paris air?~~
~~Where is Roxie Delaney's falcon?~~
~~The other?~~
~~What other colors?~~

I meant to ask you if you like these expressions: OH!! and AH!! etc. . . .

When "always and not" signifies something, "The signified or if" belongs to the Zero set. Have we met before ??. . .

Love ARAKAWA.

P.S. What good news about Willy Brandt's re-election, Sun 1972.

Fig. 44: Arakawa, *Correspondence from Shūsaku Arakawa to Kynaston McShine and Anne d'Harnoncourt*, November 27, 1972

Fig. 45: Arakawa, *Landscape*, 1967. Acrylic and pencil on canvas. 49 x 73 in. (124.5 x 185.4 cm.)

1 Midori Yoshimoto and Reiko Tomii, Oral History interview with Shūsaku Arakawa, April 4, 2009; https://oralhistory.org/archives/index_en.php. Accessed July 22, 2023.

2 Arakawa, "Notes on My Paintings: What I am Mistakenly Looking For," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 44, no.2, November 1969, 29.

3 Charles Haxthausen, "The Road to Critical Resemblances House," in Michael Govan ed., *Reversible Destiny: Arakawa/Gins* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1997), 16.

4 The indeterminate linguistic score (soon to become the main matrix of Fluxus performance), and subsequent models of post-disciplinary instruction pieces were developed in the proto-Fluxus period (1959–61); first, by artists studying Experimental Composition with John Cage (George Brecht: the event score), and emerging composers (La Monte Young), sound poets (Jackson Mac Low), and choreographers (Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer). The concept of a work that viewers/perceivers could walk on—one example among many kinds of involvement that could be cited here—extends from Yoko Ono in 1961 to Carl Andre in 1967.

5 Arakawa, "Notes on My Paintings: What I am mistakenly looking for;" *Arts Magazine*, Vol. 44, No. 2, November, 1969, 29.

6 Robert Morris said that being a "painting basher" was all but *de rigeur* at that time; he compared it to walking around in public wearing an 'I like Ike' pin. Note to the author, February, 2017.

7 Duchamp's name is mentioned all through the Arakawa literature from interviews to longer scholarly essays; but *mentioned* it is, rather than unpacked or adequately analyzed. The dominant anecdote has his mentor in Tokyo, the Surrealist poet-artist Takiguchi Shūzō, giving the young, twenty-something artist two things at the moment of his departure from Japan to come to the US: a small amount of money and Duchamp's phone number. Depending on the source, the story goes on to say that Arakawa called Duchamp (his only contact) as soon as he landed at JFK. Finally, that they arranged to meet the same day in Washington Square Park and went to eat (plain noodles) together. In a late interview conducted by Midori Yoshimoto and Reiko Tomii, Arakawa embellished the story with additional details, for instance, about how Duchamp's immediate and enthusiastic support of him made him persona grata in the center of the New York art world (with John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, et al). See Midori Yoshimoto and Reiko Tomii, Oral History interview with Arakawa Shūsaku, April, 4, 2009; https://oralarthistory.org/archives/index_en.php. Accessed July 22, 2023. I thank Midori Yoshimoto for her scholarly generosity in answering questions I had during the writing of this text.

8 There were several other small publications available on Duchamp; the above are simply the main ones.

9 At the end of their essay, "Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist" (first published in New York, in a special issue of *View* magazine devoted to Duchamp, March, 1945, and in London, in the journal *Horizon*, Vol. XII, No. 70, October 1945 and then in *The Dada Painters and Poets*) Harriet and Sidney Janis hint at the potential of this information: "the treasure trove of subtleties in creative ideas and techniques in Duchamp's work is still essentially untouched. Tapping these resources will provide a rich yield for the new generation of painters [artists], in whose awareness lies the future of twentieth-century painting [art]". I add "artists" and "art" here—as opposed to the emphasis on the medium being abandoned—because Duchamp was behind the shift in terminology. They close by calling Duchamp's oeuvre "one of the great, little explored veins in contemporary art." Harriet and Sidney Janis, "Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist," in Robert Motherwell, ed., *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Bellknap Press, Harvard University, 1981), 315. Another pivotal figure (and Duchampian) in Arakawa's milieu and moment, Walter Hopps, noted in the catalogue of the 1964 *Boxes* show at Dwan Gallery LA (in which Arakawa participated): "Duchamp… retains an outrageous hoard of this century's patents, from a position without geographic locus or the stamp of style."

10 Many details in this book make appearances in the statements, the writings, and of course the work of artists in the generation under discussion (including Morris and then Arakawa). Influential since its initial publication in 1951—knowing the Motherwell means recognizing its import in the ideas/work of John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, Jasper Johns, and many of their 1950s contemporaries. By 1960 this book was being passed around among artists, read publicly, and what was performable, performed.

11 Harriet and Sidney Janis, "Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist," op. cit., 314.

12 See for example, Johns' *Device Circle*, 1959, and Arakawa's *In the Shadow There Are 180,000 Wet Lines*, 1964.

13 It is tempting to call "electricity" a Duchampian metaphor, but the latter term would be too literary, and too limiting; it would be to ignore the role of "electricity" in the entire system; from all the round movement (behind which, *inter alia*, the measure of electric currents named after Heinrich Hertz: cycles per second) to the conducting metals that appear in different guises/with multiple functions across Duchamp's notes.

14 This was the first complete translation of notes from the *Green Box*, published as *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even:* a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box; translated by George Heard Hamilton, (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd., 1960, New York: Bradford for George Wittenborn, Inc., 1960).

15 Robert Morris, Oral History Interview with Paul Cummings, New York, March 10, 1968, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

16 Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, "Artists Who Are Making Boxes: Symphony Which No Instruments Play." *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Evening Edition, March 26, 1962, 7.

17 Chambers Street is located in downtown Manhattan (TriBeCa).

18 Forti shared the program with Jim Dine and Claes Oldenburg. The titles of two pieces, *Dine's Shining Bed* and Oldenburg's *Erasers*, suggest that they might have been looking at *The Dada Painters and Poets*, and seen the page with the pun on *littérature [LITS et RATURES]* writ large. In this, they were apparently following in the footsteps of Robert Rauschenberg (*Lit/Bed*, 1955), Cy Twombly's practically career-long "ratures" (i.e. loops of chalk-like marks on blackboards, which add the childlike element Duchamp also espoused).

19 Simone Forti, *Handbook in Motion*. Editor Kasper König (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Canada, 1974), 39.

20 *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even:* a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box; translated by George Heard Hamilton, (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd., 1960, and New York: Bradford for George Wittenborn, Inc., 1960).

21 Simone Forti, *Handbook in Motion* (Halifax: NSCAD, 1974), 56.

22 Robert Morris, "Notes on Dance," *Tulane Drama Review*, Vol. 10, No.2 (Winter 1965), 179–186. It is noteworthy that Morris, when invited by the Tate to mount a retrospective in 1971, created an entire playground's full of wood works, very much related to the "Duchampian" ones he built for Forti a decade earlier, now to be negotiated and performed by museum visitors (it was shut down within a few days for institutional reasons about the pieces being "dangerous").

23 *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even:* a typographic version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box; translated by George Heard Hamilton, (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd., 1960, and New York: Bradford for George Wittenborn, Inc., 1960).

24 There are invocations of the stored energy—that Forti, as a dancer, was able to draw out of the Duchamp—in Arakawa's early "white paintings" (discussed below); the luminosity of spray paint supplies part of this. We can confirm the notion that the *Green Box* notes played a role, obliquely, via the meticulous Hamilton. He was of course steeped in the content—especially in the period when he made the painting *Hommage à Chrysler Corp,* 1957 (also discussed below)—because he was in the middle of the vast undertaking of graphically translating Duchamp's notes. One page from this publication has a gloss interjected by Hamilton's collaborator, George Heard Hamilton, for the term "Sandow." "Note, Sandow in French is a mechanical chest-expander, so called after the famous strong man." Duchamp had proposed using these devices to catapult the chariot back into position, and planned to present stored energy thus: "In the picture the sandows will be at rest (almost relaxed)." For his part, R. Hamilton included "strong men" in his work from 1956 onward, and in 1963 made a painting featuring the Sandow: *Adonis in Y Fronts*.

25 Robert Morris, "Some Reasons Why I Like Duchamp," unpublished letter to La Monte Young, 1961.

26 To paraphrase John Cage speaking to his New School class (summer, 1958), and invoking the 'old' method of collage—he often used art metaphors, rather than musical ones—he said that the new music, as events in space to be grasped from any part of the auditorium, no longer needed the "glue"- it would cohere anyway. George Brecht, Notebook, (Cage class), summer, 1958.

27 Unpublished and almost entirely unknown. Young was still in California. MD Rx—in the U.S. "Rx" is often seen in pharmacies, meaning prescriptions can be filled here.

28 Robert Morris, "MD-Rx" unpublished m.s. (Henry Flynt archive, NY). Morris submitted "MD Rx" to La Monte Young's publication *An Anthology* in 1961, and withdrew his submission in mid-1962.

29 Ibid.

30 Morris' formulation (concerning "successions of concepts" and the "weight" now placed on "the idea") is important, as noted above, insofar as it anticipates Conceptual Art by at least half a decade. But it is equally significant for our account of Arakawa because it expands (and redates) the category of Conceptual Art. Historians sometimes put him in that category; at other times they come up with hybrid terms that prove imprecise; but mostly Arakawa, like these observation by Morris, may indicate above all that "Conceptual Art" was made by and for a particular and very limited group of artists.

31 Cage's *modus operandi* was to establish a field of choices (e.g. of instruments, or time frames and events in a spatio-temporal field) larger than needed, and use *chance operations* to decide which elements would make up the composition. We have become so used to Cage's prominence in this area that it feels odd to attribute this, too, to Duchamp. This means acknowledging that Cage was not the initiator of the chance technique, he was simply among the first to grasp it.

32 Morris seems to have been well aware that Cage was drawing on Duchamp. He makes a derogatory comment in this text about students of Cage.

33 Robert Morris, *MD-Rx* op. cit.

34 Kajiya Kenji in conversation with Ay-O, interlocutors Nishikawa Mihoko and Honnami Kiyoshi, November 6, 2011. Oral History archives of Japanese Art. Published in *1963—Boxing Match, Revisited 4 Sculptors Shūsaku Arakawa Ay-O Robert Morris Masunobu Yoshimura* exhibition catalogue, Castelli Gallery, 2019, 34.

35 One suspects that Duchamp's emphasis on the note, *Combat de Boxe* not used—despite it being displayed in an important place—was part of the <notes : final work> ratio discussed above.

36 See appendix section titled "The Diagram" by Richard Hamilton. I underscore this here given the importance the diagrammatic would soon have for Arakawa—to which we will return.

37 Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, "Artists Who Are Making Boxes: Symphony Which No Instruments Play," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Evening Edition, March 26, 1962, 7. Published in *1963—Boxing Match, Revisited 4 Sculptors Shūsaku Arakawa Ay-O Robert Morris Masunobu Yoshimura* exhibition catalogue, Castelli Gallery, 2019, 34.

38 Donald Judd, "In the Galleries: Boxing Match," *Arts Magazine*, May/June 1963, 90. All Judd quotes are from this source.

39 K.L., "Boxing Match," *ArtNews*, March 1963.

40 Donald Judd, "In the Galleries: Boxing Match," *Arts Magazine*, May/June 1963, 90. Published in *1963—Boxing Match, Revisited 4 Sculptors Shūsaku Arakawa Ay-O Robert Morris Masunobu Yoshimura* exhibition catalogue, Castelli Gallery, 2019, 34.

41 Ibid.

42 K.L., "Boxing Match," *ArtNews*, March 1963. Published in *1963—Boxing Match, Revisited 4 Sculptors Shūsaku Arakawa Ay-O Robert Morris Masunobu Yoshimura* exhibition catalogue, Castelli Gallery, 2019, 34.

43 When this work was shown in Japan in 1958, there was a wholly different line of interpretation, as someone read the rough, almost amorphous cement forms inside Arakawa's coffin works as referring to the impact—immediate or enduring—of the United States' bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

44 Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (London: Trianon Press, 1959), Plate 96.

45 The coffin pieces he had begun in Japan contained forms that were biomorphic or amorphous—the central detail, then typically made of cement—that was *embellished* with matter from Tokyo trash heaps.

46 This show is discussed in impressive detail by Keenan Jay, in *Ambiguous Zones*, #11 (Nov. 4, 2022), the newsletter of The Reversible Destiny Foundation: https://www.reversibledestiny.org/ambiguous-zones-11/ Accessed August 22, 2023.This little-known, short-lived gallery had a group show that included Arakawa along with Morris, Ay-o, and Yoshimura (all in *Boxing Match*) as well as Oldenburg, Dine, Chamberlain, and Motherwell.

47 John Weber to Arakawa, January 20, 1964. Dwan Gallery Records, Smithsonian Archives of American Art.

48 Keenan Jay, in *Ambiguous Zones*, op. cit.

49 Put simply, the rayograph is a cameraless photograph made by placing objects onto light sensitive paper and exposing the ensemble. Man Ray branded this photo-based art form with his name, but he did not invent the method and the process, which extends back to John Herschel and Anna Atkins in the nineteenth century, and forward to Lazólo Maholy-Nagy in the twentieth.

50 Arakawa, [his emphasis] *Arakawa/Gins: Reversible Destiny*, Guggenheim Museum, 1997, 29.

51 While addressing so many issues about an explosive, exponential rise in commodification in the postwar moment, Hamilton's *Chrysler* also managed to address Duchamp's note about the hood without a motor.

52 William R. Kaizen, "Richard Hamilton's Tabular Image," *October 94*, Autumn 2000, 113–128.

53 Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (London: Trianon Press, 1959), 42. My emphasis. To give an indication of the layers of significance/signification that so interested Arakawa in Duchamp, we should note, there is more to the Kandinsky example. The use of the compass(es) reads as Bauhausian compared to the bigger picture of the impact the Russian artist had on Duchamp, at a key moment in the experimentation (1912–1918), which was played out in *Tu m'*. That it is a predominantly yellow painting—corresponding to Duchamp's notion of "a world in yellow" (see the title page in the *Green Box*/book, Hamilton trans.)—has an echo in Kandinsky's theatrical work (a.k.a. "color tone drama) *Der Gelbe Klang (*The Yellow Sound), 1909 [published 1912]. Duchamp traveled to Munich in 1912 and encountered Kandinsky, purchasing his landmark *Uber das geistige in der Kunst* (On the Spiritual in Art). One of the key terms in that treatise is *innerer Klang* (inner resonance); whether this was the actual inspiration for the "Klang" in *Tu m'* may or may not be provable. In any case, as one of the inventors of abstract painting, part of Kandinsky's defense of this perceived disintegration of representation was to compare it to the inherent abstraction of music. As always with Duchamp, the use of the compass surely delighted him at many levels. Beyond its facilitation of the drawing of circles—his ideal form not least for its alliterative and actual relation to electricity, the Hertz measure: cycles per second—and that the latter, based on frequency waves, corresponds to pitch in music, or that this returns us to the *waves* he aligned with the *3 Standard Stoppages* at the right (not those at left) in *Tu m'*. Clearly Arakawa (and Gins) embraced this consummate, not to say exhaustive, pursuit of polyvalence.

54 Ibid. My emphasis.

55 Duchamp, *Green Box* note from Hamilton, 1960, n.p.

56 Johns brought the *two similar things* note into focus in his 1959 statement for *Sixteen Americans*, Dorothy Miller curator, Museum of Modern Art, New York (December 16, 1959–Feb. 17, 1960). Of course Rauschenberg had been jostling forms of "parasols" and "sieves"—brides and bachelors, and much else relating to Duchamp's notes—in his combines for at least five years.

57 Harriet and Sidney Janis, "Marcel Duchamp: Anti-Artist," op. cit., 308.

58 Ibid., 314.

59 Johns' *Device Circle*, 1959 follows the logic of Duchamp's note to self: "use the standard stopps." His earlier work is thus pre-ordained as the *device* that will define the field. But Johns clearly got the Lebel-Kandinsky/*Tu m'*-compass memo as well (as Arakawa did), and centered his painting on the circle. Given this correlation, and the fact of the target sketches in Duchamp's notes, it has always seemed a bit disingenuous of Johns to have said that he uses preexisting matrices because they take care of the source for the (non-) composition, freeing him up to develop other elements.

60 The Dwan Gallery, both in Los Angeles (1959–65) and New York (1965–71) made exceptional, standout posters (and magazine ads) for their shows.

61 Here is a sampling of Arakawa's wildly excessive, if not, in some cases, preposterous titles for works in the Dwan *Dieagrams* show, 1964: *The Double Image of the Cosine Graph; The Hangar is Under the Ground. How Can it M-O-V-E; The Spectrum of Time Discovered; As he was somersaulting through the air, he stopped in mid-air and he caught a glimpse of the umbrella and funnel having intercourse; he saw the umbrella falling down into the hook which was looking at the comb in the funnel-shaped garden* (this is the max); *The Officially Recognized S.A. Equation; The Method of Advancing a Great Distance by Descending; The ocean has been cut into equal parts; and one of these parts has been taken out of it; Mass Multiplied by Speed Equals the Spectrum; The Time Within the Refrigerator has Color; In the Shadow There are 180,000 Wet Lines; In the Cross-section of the Hangar We Can See a Different Blood for Every Color of the Spectrum; If you want, you can make everything by accelerating the mixer to the speed of light; if you cannot believe this please hang your hat on the double hook; The Hook and the Comb Marry and their Child can Shit Seven Colors; I Looked Between the Umbrella and the Ceiling; Without the Water the Ship Moved Upside Down Through the Solid Rock; The Discovery of the Second Law of Perspective.*

62 This recalls Johns' response to Duchamp's call for a "hinge" picture, with his first targets—four faces and plaster casts—and, in the case of *Target with Plaster Casts*, 1955, with its prospect of sometimes closeted male body parts, after Alfred Barr of MoMA asked if some of the hinged wood panels could remain closed. Arakawa would create some explicit *hinge* paintings (like the breaking bottle work in the present exhibition).

63 Man Ray, *L'Homme* (Man), 1918. Gelatin silver print, 48.3 × 36.8cm. Private collection, New York

64 Four years later Johns would make the same drastic mistake of taking the liberty to reorganize the parts of the *Glass* adapting it as a stage set for Merce Cunningham's *Walkaround Time*, 1968. When Johns asked Duchamp, who was in the audience in the year before he died, whether he liked the set, he said he wished Johns might reestablish the original (top-bottom) format of the *Large Glass* at least at some point in the dance.

65 Schiff practically became the Dwan Gallery's house photographer, apt as it was to have his eye on the difficult (proto-)conceptual art for which it became known.

66 Correspondence, Dwan Gallery—Artist file—Arakawa—March 10, 1965. Needless to say, he was thrilled to have found all this *free* 'media,' but he was not exactly destitute. Dwan had given him a three year contract ($300/month and $1000/year for art materials). "I hear Virginia wants to open in New York," Arakawa added.

67 Harriet and Sidney Janis (*View*, March 1945; and *The Dada Painters and Poets*, 1951. Here are the Janises: "This object was constructed from a textbook—a treatise on geometry—opened face up, hanging in midair and rigged diagonally to the corners of a porch. It was left suspended there for a period of time, during which the wind could blow and tear its pages of geometric formulae, the rain drench them, and the sun bleach and fade them. Thus exposed to the weather, 'the treatise seriously got the facts of life.' ('What is the solution?' Duchamp proceeds to ask. 'There is no solution because there is no problem. Problem is the invention of man—it is nonsensical.')"

68 David Joselit, "Dada's Diagrams" in Leah Dickerman and Matthew S. Witkovsky ed., *The Dada Seminars* (The National Gallery of Art: Washington, 2005), 222.

69 Lawrence Alloway, "Arakawa's Paintings: a Reading," *Arts Magazine* (New York) 44, no. 2 (Nov. 1969), 26.

70 Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act," *ArtNews* (Summer, 1957) 28–29, reprinted in Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (London: Trianon Press, 1959), 77-78.

71 Duchamp, "The Creative Act," in Lebel, 78

72 Insofar as the *The Mechanism of Meaning*, puts the emphasis on the "reader/perceiver" and how meaning comes together for them, it mirrors that concept in John Cage's theory of "indeterminacy" (also, surely, Duchamp-derived). Put simply, the composer's idea of music/sounds heard from different places in one space would effectively hand over the "composition" to the listener-perceiver, who would *arrange* the sound in their own way.

73 Arakawa continues this in 1989 in *Painting for Closed Eyes*—with its ramps and other activating objects or props—moving the viewer around the space and into different orientations vis à vis the wall-bound artwork.

74 Arakawa's statement for the catalogue of the 1973 Duchamp retrospective. Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, ed., *Marcel Duchamp* (New York and Philadelphia: The Museum of Modern Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973), 181. "A line is a crack" generates several works by Arakawa (painting, drawing, print).

I would like to thank Emily Schecter for all her invaluable help to me during the preparation of this essay. My real gratitude as well to Barbara Bertozzi Castelli for her unwavering trust and patience under pressure.

ARAKAWA:

FROM DEBUT TO DEPARTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES

Hirayoshi Yukihiro

FOREWARD

Arakawa Shūsaku was born in 1936 in Nagoya, located in Aichi Prefecture. After graduating from a prefectural high school, where he focused on art, Arakawa enrolled in the Musashino Art School (now Musashino Art University) in Tokyo and began devoting himself completely to visual arts. At the time, Arakawa dreamed of a career in the United States, as many artists of his generation did, and he eventually made his way to New York City in December of 1961. The work Arakawa made after arriving in New York is well-known, beginning with diagrammatic paintings that show a tendency towards Conceptual Art, such as *The Mechanism of Meaning*, and proceeding in the direction towards architectural and environmental constructions that eventually led to the "Reversible Destiny" projects. In 1997, Arakawa became the first Japanese artist to have a solo show at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo.[1]

On the other hand, Arakawa's activity before leaving for the United States is almost unknown outside of Japan, even if he had been exhibiting his work since 1957. Contrary to the work that Arakawa and Madeline Gins (working together as Arakawa+Gins) developed in New York, which dealt with the intellectual exploration of visual art and language, and involved scientists and philosophers, Arakawa's work done in Japan, known as the "coffin series", cannot be grasped in an analytical way, because the *Coffin* contains a physical power and the artist seems to control his own energy through a struggle with the materials. At the same time, there are links between Arakawa's work before coming to the United States and his work after moving there. His inclinations and ideas remained consistent, and the stylistic changes should be seen as a continuous progression towards the "Reversible Destiny" project.

This essay will begin by outlining Arakawa's artistic morphology and activities of his early works in an attempt to connect "Arakawa Shūsaku" of the early period and "Arakawa" after his move to the United States.[2] Let us first contextualize the Japanese contemporary art scene in which Arakawa made his debut. In the late 1950s, after the postwar

reconstruction, a strong demand emerged for the radical rethinking of conventional values. Initially, the media referred to this as the "anti-art" movement, but with increased awareness of simultaneous movements like American Neo-Dada and French Nouveau Réalisme, the term "Japanese Neo-Dada" came to be applied to visual art.

Before World War II, Japan's art-world establishment offered artists opportunities to present their work for critical evaluation through affiliation with various *kōbo dantai*, organizations holding open-call exhibitions. In opposition to this system, an "individualist" movement emerged, in which an artist would hold a solo show by contracting with galleries or renting venues independently. Artists who did not belong to a *kōbo dantai* group sought platforms for free expression, and so "independent exhibitions" became the venues of choice for them. The two most significant "independent exhibitions" were the Japan Independent Exhibition and the Yomiuri Independent Exhibition (shortened hereafter as the Yomiuri Independent). Young artists with avant-garde and iconoclastic tendencies, including Arakawa, came together at the Yomiuri Independent, which became a forum for emerging artists who lacked both the recognition and the finances to rent their own spaces, allowing them to express themselves freely.

THE YOMIURI INDEPENDENT EXHIBITION AND NEO-DADA

It is believed that Arakawa first participated in the Yomiuri Independent in 1957, even if proof of this is missing. Around that time, the exhibition became the venue of choice for many of his contemporaries who spearheaded the postwar Japanese "anti-art" movement. They were in their early twenties and what they lacked in confidence, they made up for in

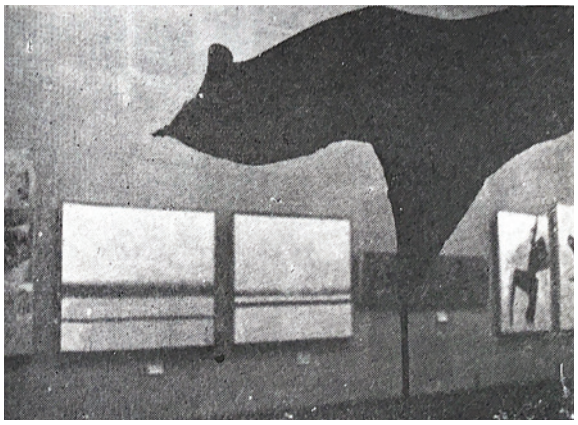


Fig.1: Arakawa's sculpture *Ningen—Suna no utsuwa E* (Human—Container of Sand E), in the foreground, installation view of the 12th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition, 1960

enthusiasm. It is commonly recognized that Arakawa showed work in the Yomiuri Independent five times, from the 9th edition in 1957 to the 13th edition in 1961, the year he moved to the United States. The first recorded presentation by Arakawa, *Ningen—Suna no utsuwa* (Human—Container of Sand), was exhibited at the 12th edition in 1960, even if unfortunately, there is no detailed documentation. Consisting of six works, labeled A through F, including four paintings and two sculptures, the sculptures can only be described as strange amorphous blobs hardened with cement. These works no longer exist, but installation views of the venue were published in magazines at that time (Fig. 1). Akasegawa Genpei, who also participated in the Yomiuri Independent, reminisced about the chaotic scene at the exhibition in an essay:

> Arakawa succeeded in leading Takiguchi Shūzō over to where his own work was displayed. I believe he was exhibiting a set of paintings and sculptures that appeared to be coated with sand, titled *Ningen—Suna no utsuwa* (Human—Container of Sand). While viewing these works, Takiguchi murmured in a low voice close to Arakawa's ear. I was standing nearby, but I couldn't make out what he was saying. As people around realized it was the great Takiguchi Shūzō and stopped to listen, his voice seemed to become even quieter. I'm sure Arakawa could barely hear him either, but he nodded repeatedly as if fully understanding Takiguchi's words.[3]

Takiguchi Shūzō had been active as a poet and art critic since before World War II and was a key proponent of Surrealism in Japan. For many young postwar artists, having Takiguchi praise or even notice their work was of paramount importance. Akasegawa's recollection suggests that Arakawa first spoke with Takiguchi at the aforementioned encounter, but Arakawa later revealed that he had gotten to know Takiguchi several years prior, having been introduced by Kaidō Hideo, deputy chief of the culture desk at the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper and one of the organizers of the Yomiuri Independent. If this is indeed the case, that would mean that Arakawa was known to key figures involved with the Yomiuri Independent at a very early stage of his career. Be that as it may, Arakawa withdrew from Musashino Art School after just a few weeks and diligently continued his artistic pursuits and presented his works at the Yomiuri Independent.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Yomiuri Independent rapidly became the center of Neo-Dadaist creations. A pivotal moment occurred at the 12th edition in 1960 when the art critic Tōno Yoshiaki labeled Kudō Tetsumi's work "anti-art debris" in a newspaper review,[4] further fueling the Anti Art movement. Young artists in this 12th edition came together to form a group that embraced Neo-Dada. Initiated by Yoshimura Masunobu, the group included Akasegawa Genpei, Kazakura Shō, Toyoshima Souroku, Ushio Shinohara, and Arakawa, who was brought on by Akasegawa. They named themselves Neo Dadaism Organizers and held their first group exhibition in April of 1960 at Ginza Gallery. To publicize the exhibition, members of the group paraded through the streets of Ginza in various disguises, presenting an iconic spectacle that symbolized the momentum of Japanese Neo-Dada at the time (Fig. 2).

Their second exhibition took place in July at Yoshimura Masunobu's studio, nicknamed the Shinjuku White House and partially designed by Isozaki Arata. Arakawa exhibited a work titled *Suna no utsuwa* (Container of Sand) consisting of a wooden box measuring 4 15/16 × 49 3/16 × 31 1/2 inches (Fig. 3). This seems to have been the first "coffin" work that Arakawa exhibited.[5] To quote Akasegawa's description:

> At the second exhibition, Arakawa Shūsaku showed his first coffin work. Inside the box was a silk-covered cushion, and on top of it was a solemnly laid-out, corpse-like cement mass covered with a thin layer of cotton.[6]

Fig. 2 Kobayashi Masanori, *Ginza wo aruku sakkatachi* (Artists walking through Ginza), Arakawa is fourth from the right, April 1960, Oita Art Museum

Fig.3: Arakawa Shūsaku, *Suna no utsuwa* (Container of Sand), 1958–59. Cement, cotton, fabric, wood chips, wood. 4 15/16 x 49 3/16 x 31 1/2 inches (12.5 x 124.9 x 80 centimeters). Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

Arakawa himself recalled that he was quite mentally unstable during this period. One could see him attempting to regain stability by solidifying his fragmented self with cement and laying it to rest on a cushion inside of a wooden box. However, we should refrain from too simplistically linking the "meaning" of the work to the artist's life. Let us return to his practice and its historical context.

COFFINS AND CEMENT

The Yomiuri Independent gave rise to many other artists' groups in addition to Neo Dadaism Organizers. Not satisfied with simply displaying their works in galleries, the Neo Dadaism Organizers began taking their collective energy to the streets and carried out various performances.

During the costume parade through Ginza, Arakawa wore a kimono, *geta* clogs and wrapped his head in bandages. However, there were aspects of the group's anarchic collective energy that did not fully resonate with him. He appeared to look on silently while other members made a ruckus. In September of 1960, five months after the group's formation, Arakawa held his first solo exhibition at Muramatsu Gallery in Ginza. Titled *Mō hitotsu no hakaba* (Another Graveyard), it consisted exclusively of "coffin" works. Inside rectangular wooden boxes were fabrics of various colors filled with wood chips, and a blob of cement placed in the center. The blobs bore vivid traces of Arakawa's hands grasping, feet treading, and full body grappling with the cement. Attached to their surfaces was cotton-like fluff, along with pieces of metal, such as nails, iron, rods, parts of steam-irons, and mirrors. This combination gave rise to mysterious textures in which hardness and softness coexisted (Fig. 4). Apparently, viewers were invited to open the lids and peer inside. The use of the word "graveyard" in the exhibition title may account for why Arakawa's works from this period were referred to as "coffin-shaped" rather than "box-shaped." In a review Tōno Yoshiaki commented on the exhibition:

> "The cement and cotton themselves bear the indelible mark of the artist's mental instability and fear, and the internal obsession visibly transforms into a solid mass. This is a hidden aspect of this unique artist."[7]

Suna no utsuwa (Container of Sand), 1958–59, was likely created earlier than Arakawa's 1960 solo exhibition. In early 1961 he held another solo exhibition at Mudo Gallery, featuring fifteen "coffin" works. Considering these exhibitions, it is evident that Arakawa dedicated much of his energy to creating numerous "coffin" pieces of various sizes around this time. His solo exhibition at Muramatsu Gallery was viewed by the other members of the Neo Dadaism Organizers, as "disrupting group activities," leading to Arakawa's departure from the group.

For Arakawa, what was the significance of participating in Neo Dadaism Organizers and his interactions with other members? He rarely spoke about or mentioned his Neo-Dada period, even showing signs of discomfort when the topic arose. It is possible that while engaging

Fig.4 : Arakawa Shūsaku, *Rensaku-Mō hitotsu no hakaba* (Another Graveyard—Series), 1960. Mixed media. 39 3/8 x 22 13/16 x 5 7/8 inches (100 x 58 x 15 cm.). Sezon Museum of Modern Art, Japan

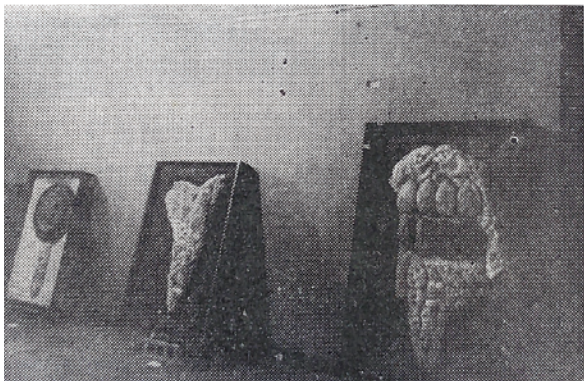


Fig.5: Arakawa Shūsaku, installation view, Mudo Gallery, 1961

with the artists of his generation at the Yomiuri Independent show and in the Neo-Dada group, Arakawa felt the reality and limitations of being in a small "Far East" country like Japan. This sentiment may have been well understood by his supporters, including Takiguchi Shūzō, Kaidō Hideo, Tōno Yoshiaki, and art critic Ebara Jun. They went to great lengths to assist Arakawa by providing financial support and making arrangements for his journey to New York. In the early 1960s, before his departure for the United States, Arakawa had received support from Idemitsu Sazō, founder of the oil company Idemitsu Kōsan, and father of Idemitsu Takako, Tōno Yoshiaki's partner. Eventurally Sazō provided Arakawa with a plane ticket. At Haneda Airport, Takiguchi bid farewell to Arakawa and gave him a parting gift that included Marcel Duchamp's phone number.[8] In December 1961, Arakawa arrived at a snow-covered Idlewild Airport (now John F. Kennedy International Airport) in New York and legend says he immediately made a phone call to Duchamp before heading to Washington Square. However, the topic of our discussion is the time prior to his departure. Let us return to early 1961.

Arakawa's second solo exhibition at Mudo Gallery in January of 1961, was organized by Ebara Jun(Fig. 5). It featured fifteen works, all individually listed in a catalogue.[9] The opening involved a spectacle in which the gallery was completely dark and various sized rings of light caused the works to appear and disappear. Arakawa referred to this as the "spiritual ritual of the worlds artistic geniuses." The darkness, the viewing of the works by opening the lids of boxes, the ritualistic performance, and the eerie irregular biomorphic forms, all pointed to

the influence of surrealism on Arakawa's early works and exhibition approach. One might be reminded of the 1938 International Surrealist Exhibition, in Paris, where Salvador Dalí and Marcel Duchamp oversaw the layout and production.

It is important to note that the late 1950s in Tokyo was a time of transition from Surrealism to Dada. Japan was focused on recovery from its World War II defeat, and Surrealist-style approaches proved to be effective in reinterpreting human activities and social issues within the context of art. Artists such as Okamoto Tarō, who participated in international Surrealist exhibitions before the war, inspired the younger postwar generation. Emerging art critics such as Tōno, Nakahara Yūsuke, Hariu Ichirō, and Ebara, were all acolytes of Takiguchi, and they aimed to study and critically transcend Surrealism. The chaotic energy of young Japanese artists at that time came to be described as Neo-Dada especially after Tōno's return from his first trip to Europe and the United States in 1958. Whether consciously or subconsciously, Arakawa, too, was influenced by the spirit of the time and was baptized in the waters of Surrealism. The following quote from the poet Ōoka Makoto from 1957, resonates with Arakawa's stance of breaking down barriers between art and science and unlocking the infinite possibilities of humanity:

> The impulse propelling the Surrealists was not merely literary or artistic ambition, but a much deeper aspiration to understand the totality of the human experience, what you might call "the science of humanity."[10]

ART AND SCIENCE: EXPLORING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Arakawa was already endeavoring to do more than make art, but art was the format he was "borrowing." It was only after he became acquainted with Duchamp that Arakawa became aware of the need to

take steps outside this format. Duchamp urged him to "do something other than art", while he and Madeline Gins attempted to go beyond Duchamp. However, it seems valid to say that "the science of humanity" was Arakawa's aim from the start.

In that sense, the titles of the works in his 1961 Mudo Gallery solo show are intriguing. Many refer to scientists, and like the titles of his later works, they already show a stance of questioning the relationship between language and imagery. Here are the titles of the fifteen works:

Kōsei busshitsu to shiin ni hasamareta Ainshutain (Einstein Between Matter's Structure and Faintest Sound)[11]
Ruisenko no sakadachi (Lysenko's Handstand)
Wakusei ni notta Tonbō shi (Mr. Tombow on a planet)
Rōzenberugu no nihyakuman no shinwa (The Two-Million Myths of Rosenberg)
Bīdoru shi no noisupora (kabi) no hen'yō (The Change in Mr. Beadle's Neurospora [Mold]
So shi no onketsudoubutsu no shinzouishoku (Mr. So's Heart Transplant Using a Warm-Blooded Animal)
Wakkusuman no mune (Waksman's Chest)
Raberu no jikan (Ravel's Time)
Kuwain no kazu no kao (The Number of Quine's Faces)
Gōrudoshumitto no mensu (Goldschmidt's Menses)
Opārin hakase no inori (Dr. Oparin's Prayer)
Oppenhaimā to Kāruson no uchūsenjō no konrei (The Wedding of Oppenheimer and Carlsson on a Cosmic Ray)
Chōtajikan no naka no Tomonaga Shinichirō shi (Tomonga Shinichiro in Super-Many Time)
Jorio fusai hakase no ekusutashī (The Ecstasy of Dr. and Mrs. Joliot)
Kyūrī fujin no omoide (Madame Curie's Memory)

The scarcity of extant artworks with identifiable titles makes it difficult to say anything definitive, but we should assume that there are no clear relationships between the meanings of the titles and the formal qualities of the sculptures. The cement-based masses are biomorphic, but fundamentally abstract in form. The names of scientists in the titles vividly illustrate that Arakawa's interest was already turning towards science, and included medicine, biology, physics, astrophysics, and biochemistry.

Shortly after his debut solo show in September of 1960 at Muramatsu Gallery, Arakawa was selected to participate in the group show *Gendai bijutsu no jikken* (Adventure in Today's Art of Japan) at the National Museum of Modern Art (now the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) to open in April of the following year. This experimental exhibition, which ran for less than three weeks, showcased the latest developments in Japanese contemporary art. It featured seventy works by sixteen different artists, ranging from Gutai Art Association members such as Shiraga Kazuo and Tanaka Atsuko to "anti-art" artists like Kudō Tetsumi, who has already drawn attention at the Yomiuri Independent. In a text he contributed to the exhibition publication, Arakawa wrote:

> Within the universe—the entirety of space-time and the matter and energy within it—the Earth is a tiny speck, and human existence is a fleeting instant. We take for granted a perception of space and time in which we scarcely venture outside the limited zone into which we were born, and it has become clear how profoundly it affects the human body (or brain cells). Recently, I have come to feel that conventional art as we know it has virtually no capacity to offer salvation to humanity. And I have begun to think that an entirely different genre of art coming from a different place, which we might call scientific art (incorporating physics, chemistry, biology and so forth), may be required to meet the challenge of saving humanity.[12]

The ultimate goal, which Arakawa would eventually term "Reversible Destiny," is already established here, expressed as "saving humanity." It exceeds the possibilities of art as we know it and calls for a new form of "scientific art." Arakawa was already aspiring to be a "coordinologist," a term he and Gins coined to describe one who seeks to integrate art, philosophy, and science and pursues the practices thereof. As mentioned earlier, one should view Arakawa's evolution as a series of steps leading to "Reversible Density." Arakawa dealt with issues of humanity and life through materials and objects; he reexamined mechanisms of meaning and logic considered unique to humans through symbols, diagrams, and language; and he sought to revolutionize the human body through devices and environmental constructions, seeking to render the self-ubiquitous and omnipresent. In retrospect, his early "coffin" sculptures, blueprint-style paintings, cryptic and prophetic texts, and "Reversible Destiny" housing were all steps on the path to "saving humanity."

IN CLOSING: HUMAN BEING= CONTAINER OF SAND

Finally, let us touch upon the Japanese title *Suna no utsuwa* (Container of Sand) Arakawa used for his works shown in the 12th Yomiuri Independent Exhibition and the second Neo Dadaism Organizers exhibition, both in 1960. When most Japanese people hear the phrase *suna no utsuwa*, their first association would be with Matsumoto Seichō's novel with the same title (translated in its English film adapation as: *Castle of Sand*). This socially conscious mystery novel dealing with discrimination against Hansen's disease patients is considered a masterpiece, adapted for the screen many times, and widely known across generations. Arakawa's works and Matsumoto's novel appeared around the same time. The book features a young cultural collective called the Nouveau Group and the protagonist is portrayed as a standard-bearer of avant-garde music such as musique concrete, showing a strong sense of contemporaneity with Arakawa's art. However, it is worth noting that Arakawa's use of the title *Suna no utsuwa* predated the novel.[13] From this, we can understand Arakawa's title not as a reference to current events at the time, but rather as his own original phrase.

In Matsumoto Seichō's case, *Suna no utsuwa* symbolizes the fragility of human vanity, and the ease with which things built up can be scattered by a gust of wind. However, in Arakawa's case, the implications may differ. The "coffin-shaped" boxes are simply titled *Container of Sand*, but the fact that the piece shown in the Yomiuri Independent was called *Ningen—Suna no utsuwa* (Human—Container of Sand) suggests that Arakawa viewed human beings as the fragile vessels in question. Cement is made by mixing sand and water, and allowing it to harden, and Arakawa's sculptural objects can literally be described as containers of solidified sand. They present a vision of the self (the human being) as a constantly evolving form, shaped through fusion with various

objects, phenomena, and situations in the surrounding environment, temporarily taking on fixed shapes only to undergo a cycle of dissolution and re-solidification once more. Arakawa's intention may have been to convey this concept through his hands and the material rather than explaining it in words.

This essay may have overemphasized the consistency of Arakawa's intent and ideas over the course of his career. Arakawa as we know him today was unmistakably profoundly influenced by his encounters with Duchamp and his collaboration with Madeline Gins after moving to the United States. Without them, he may have taken a different path altogether. However, the "coffin" works were an initial step leading to his future path, but at that moment, Arakawa's vision of the far future may still have been a container of sand, a temporary prototype of something that could not yet be named or defined.

1 The exhibition *Reversible Destiny—Arakawa/Gins* was on view from June 25 to September 1, 1997, at Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York.

2 After his move to the United States, Arakawa began identifying himself only with his last name.

3 Akasegawa Genpei, *Hangeijutsu anpan* (Anti Art Independent), Chikuma Bunko, 1999, Chikumashobō, p. 79.

4 Tōno Yoshiaki, "Garakuta no hangeijutsu" (Anti-Art Debris), *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 2, 1960, p.1.

5 Incidentally, the work Arakawa showed at the first Neo Dadaism Organizer exhibition seems to have been a "water sculpture," consisting of many plastic bags filled with water and suspended from an object. Akasegawa described it as follows: "Arakawa Shūsaku's work was a water sculpture. To an object resembling *Ningen-Suna no utsuwa* (Human—Container of Sand), the sculpture he had exhibited at the previous Yomiuri Independent, he added several plastic bags filled with water. Plastic struck people as a novel material at the time. The bags were imperfectly sealed and were always dribbling water." Akasegawa, op. cit., p. 141.

6 Ibid., p. 149.

7 Tōno Yoshiaki, "Exhibition review: Arakawa Shūsaku solo show," *Bijutsu techō* no. 181 (November 1960), p. 161.

8 In the summer of 1958, Takiguchi met Duchamp at Salvador Dalí's home in Portlligat, Spain, and he obtained Duchamp's contact information. Takiguchi gave Arakawa an envelope with 60,000 yen as a parting gift, but he placed it between the pages of a book, and it was not until about a week after arriving in New York that Arakawa discovered it in a hotel restroom. He cherished the envelope until late in life, which indicates how significant it was to him. Oral history Interview with Arakawa Shūsaku, conducted by Midori Yoshimoto and Reiko Tomii, April 4, 2009, Oral History Archives of Japanese Art (https:/oralhistory.org/archives/Arakawa_shusaku/interview_01.php) [Accessed July 17, 2023].

9 Nakahara Yūsuke's exhibition review lists the number of works as thirteen.

10 Ōoka Makoto, "Jidō kijutsu no isō" (Aspects of Automatic Writing), *Mizue* no. 623, June 1957, p. 77.

11 The title of the first work in the list, translated from its original Japanese into English as *Einstein Between Matter's Structure and Faintest Sound*, serves as an intriguing example of Arakawa's wordplay. The literal translation of the Japanese title would be *Einstein Between Antibiotics and Consonants*. In Japanese, 'kōsei busshitsu' translates to 'antibiotics.' Notably, 'kōsei' is also homophonic with 'structure', and 'busshitsu' with 'matter.' Additionally, 'shiin',when written in Japanese, is meant to be read as 'consonants',but it also serves as onomatopoeia for silence, hence 'faintest sound.'

12 Arakawa Shūsaku, "Watashi to jikū" (Space-Time and Me), *Gendai no me* (Newsletter of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) no. 77 (April 1961), p.4.

13 Matsumoto Seichō's *Suna no utsuwa* (Castle of Sand) was serialized in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* evening edition from May 17, 1960, to April 20, 1961. It is assumed that the model for the Nouveau Group was Jikken Kōbō, an artist collective whose members were mentored by Takiguchi Shūzō.

THE TITLE OF THE PORTRAIT

Ignacio Adriasola

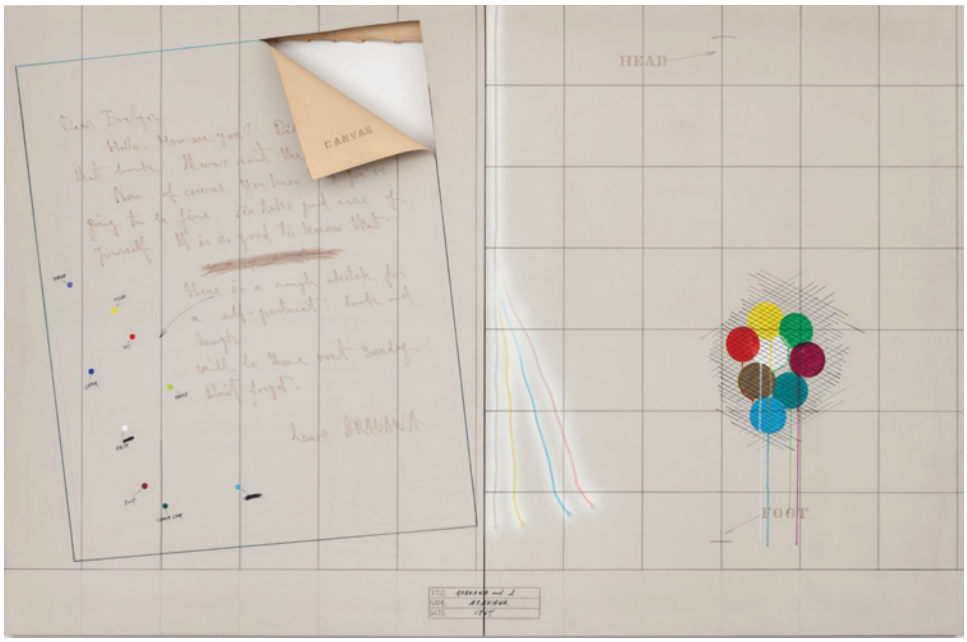


Fig. 1: Arakawa, *Arakawa and I*, 1967. Acrylic, oil, pencil, marker, and acrylic spray paint on canvas. 62 x 95 in. (157.5 x 241.3 cm.)

A work of art should always teach us that we have not seen what we see.[1]

Arakawa's title creates a space for multiple interpretations. *Arakawa and I*, 1967 (Fig. 1) can be seen as a conventional double portrait. By *conventional*, I mean that the work directly engages the generic conventions of portraiture, as developed in Early Modern European painting: think for instance of Van Eyck's Arnolfini couple, Raffaello Sanzio's double portraits or Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. Arakawa likewise depicts two figures side-by-side: "Arakawa" and "I." On the left, the artist includes a specific type of figure—a self-portrait—and joins this to a second portrait, on the right. The title identifies the figures depicted, and states unequivocally that the artist is present in the work.

Yet, looking carefully at the painting, it becomes clear that there is more going on. First, this double portrait lacks a realistic representation. Instead, the viewer is given a series of graphic and textual elements. On the right panel, are the words "HEAD" and "FOOT"

stenciled and flanked by arrows pointing to establish guidelines. Eight colored circles are lumped together and paint drips down from them. They resemble balloons suspended in space.

On the left panel, there is a letter addressed to a certain "Evelyn."[2] The author of the letter ("Arakawa") asks "Evelyn" about her health and writes, "Here is a rough sketch for a self portrait. Look and laugh." Included in the letter, an arrow points to a group of colored dots that indicate parts of the human body and everyday objects, such as "head," "foot," "sky," and "desk." The top right corner of the letter is cut and the canvas folds onto itself displaying the stenciled word, "CANVAS," adding an additional layer of complexity to the work.

The title of the work, *Arakawa and I*, is clearly written on the bottom of the canvas. When reading the title, the viewer wonders: is Arakawa both a subject (the artist who made the work) and an object (an individual portrayed in it)? Who is the "I" in the title? Who made the painting, "Arakawa" or "I."

The "I", written in the title, contains additional ambiguity. Is it indeed a capital "I?" Or maybe a lowercase "l" or "e"? Could it be "e" as in "Evelyn," from the name the letter is addressed to? Multiple conflicting interpretations arise, which lead us to wonder who the figures in this double portrait are, even if it eventually becomes clear that this is an uppercase "I." Does the right panel contain Arakawa's self-portrait? Or does it contain a portrait of a different Arakawa, maybe a fictional character who is the author of the letter on the left panel? What is the relation between the two figures depicted in this double portrait? Maybe like Duchamp's alter ego Rrose Sélavy, "Evelyn" is in fact Arakawa's double.

In *Arakawa and I*, the title itself is mobilized into the push-pull of contradiction, inviting a re-interpretation of the canvas, and of portraiture more generally. In other works, Arakawa did a similar investigation with the very idea of painting, or landscape.[3]

The title *Arakawa and I* contravenes portraiture conventions, which usually demand a distinction between the roles of artist and sitter: the subject who creates the work and the (subject-)object portrayed. (The exception to the rule is, of course, the *self-portrait*, which Arakawa depicts on the left, gleefully opening yet another layer of complexity to the painting.)

Titling in Arakawa's works plays an important role not only in terms of illuminating what the canvases depict, but also in activating them. Arakawa's diagrammatic canvases present the viewer with riddles for which there is no single solution. What these canvases have in common is a reflection on art as a specific, conventional system of representation that at the same time can serve as an experimental ground for thinking.[4] Madeline Gins—Arakawa's partner in life and work, and one of his most perceptive critics—once described the aim of his method as *pointing and modeling*. [5]

A type of threshold, a title exists both within and outside the boundaries of an artwork and serves the key purpose of providing a frame for a work's interpretation. In semiotics, a title is categorized as a type of "paratext." Gérard Genette notes that titles can be generally divided into two categories: those addressing what a work is (the rheme) and those addressing what a work is about (the theme). In art, too, we can generally agree with Genette's initial distinction between *rhemic* and *thematic* titling. Symbolist painters, for example, frequently relied on thematic titling to evoke an idea that is not immediately graspable through visual cues alone. This approach is pushed to the extreme in Surrealism, such as in René Magritte's deliberately disjointed titling for *The Treachery of Images*, 1928, or *The False Mirror*, 1929. In contrast, in Japan in the late 1950s, when Arakawa began working, many of his colleagues favored either a rather cool, rhemic titling that evoked materials and processes, or indicated no title at all: both *Sakuhin* (Work) and *Mudai* (Untitled) were rather commonly used. Arakawa, on the other hand, deliberately chose a type of wayward titling practice. His "coffin" works of these years—which contain disturbing figures fashioned out of cement and cotton, coddled in satin or silk bedding—carry titles such as *Container of Sand, Dr. Oparin's Prayer* or *Madame Curie's Memory*. The titles themselves provoke the viewer, appealing to an aesthetics of contradiction, indebted to that of Surrealism.

This type of direct emotional appeal ceases, however, with Arakawa's emphatic turn to the diagram. The shift in titling practice likewise reflects the changing importance of text within his works. What begins as aids in the "reading" of work—visual signs that assist in *pointing*, in other words—gave way to cryptic comments and onerous instructions to the viewer. These labels do not merely guide the viewer

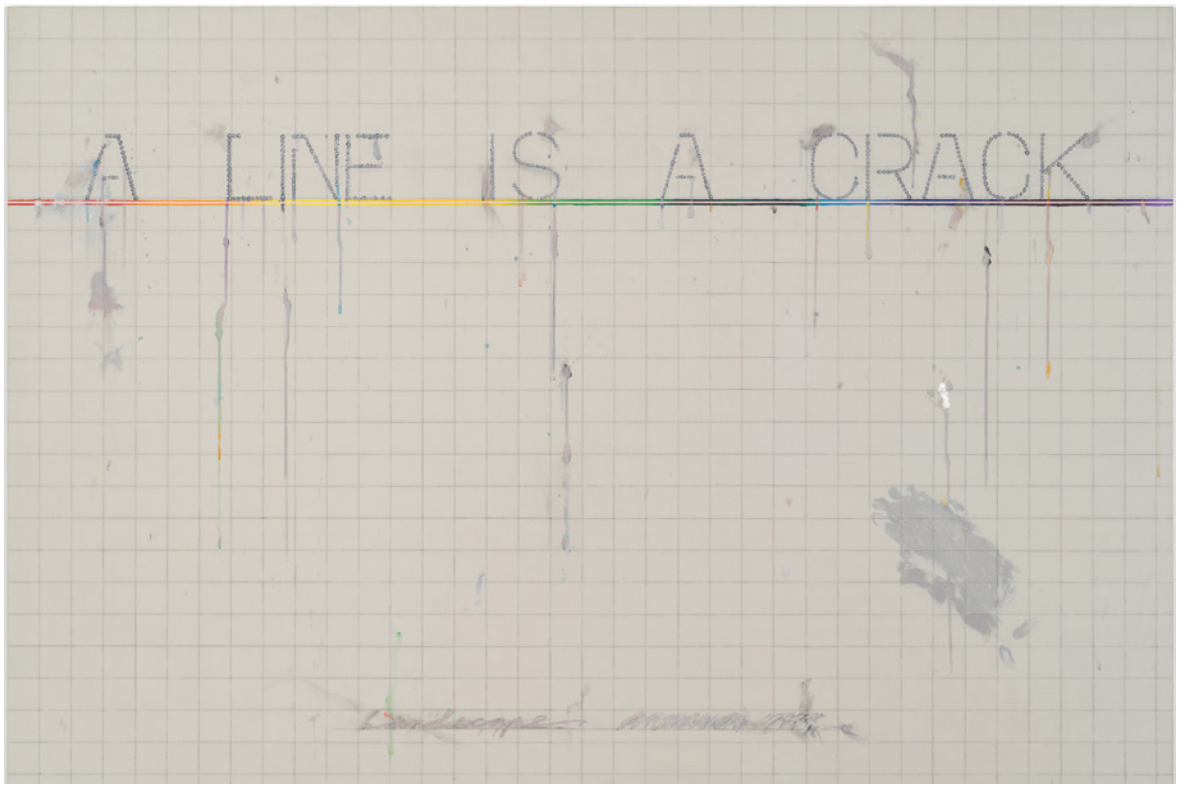


Fig. 2: Arakawa, *Landscape*, 1967. Acrylic and pencil on canvas. 49 x 73 in. (124.5 x 185.4 cm)

in the activation of the canvas: but also provide direct statements whose facticity the viewer needs to decide. Arakawa's titling introduces a different function altogether: it is *poetic*, rather than just rhemic or thematic. By poetic, I mean a performative *poiēsis*, in the classical sense of art's bringing-fourth of possibility, the movement from non-being into being.[6] This belongs to an altogether different realm than experiments concerned solely with knowledge, feeling, or meaning, the mimetic objects classically pursed by art. Rather, it is wholly concerned with doing –pointing and modeling different ways of making and being. This focus on a performative use of language is a shared concern with Gins's writing practice. In Arakawa's work the titles *do*, they activate as much as they describe. On glancing at the title, suddenly something impossible has been possible. Arakawa opens a window, and for a moment we get to glimpse beyond the canvas.

1 Paul Valéry, *Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci* (1894)

2 The name of the addressee recalls that of Arakawa's mother-in-law.

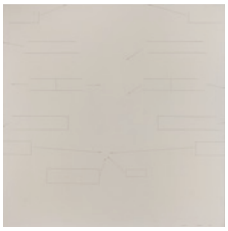
3 Consider, for example, canvases such as *Sculpting No. 1*, 1962, or *Landscape*, 1967.

4 Around this time, Arakawa wrote, "I want to make diagrams on canvas of our imagination which is itself diagrammatic," in Jacques Derrida, "Restitutions of the truth in pointing," *The Truth in Painting*, tr. Geoff Bennigton and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987): 225–382.

5 Madeline Gins, "Arakawa's Intention (To Point, To Pinpoint, To Model)," *ARAKAWA*, (Düsseldorf: Städtliche Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1977).

6 In this sense, Arakawa's "pointing" is not too far removed from what Jacques Derrida later called *pointure*: painting-as-puncturing.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST



Untitled, 1962
Pencil on canvas
60 1/4 × 60 inches
153 × 152.4 centimeters

The Forming of Untitled, 1962
Pencil on canvas
48 3/8 × 66 inches
122.9 × 167.6 centimeters

Almost, 1962
Acrylic and graphite on canvas
44 5/8 × 37 11/16 inches
113.4 × 95.8 centimeters

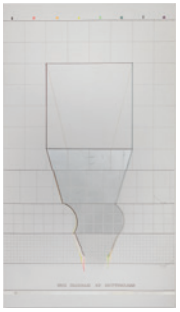
Untitled, 1963
Oil, acrylic, acrylic spray paint, pencil, and colored pencil on canvas
71 3/4 × 66 inches
182.2 × 167.6 centimeters

Untitled, 1964
Acrylic, acrylic spray paint, pencil, pen, colored pencil, and collage on canvas
65 3/4 × 60 inches
167 × 152.4 centimeters

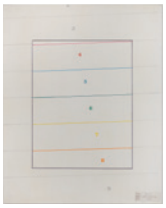
'Untitled', 1964-65
Acrylic, acrylic spray paint, pencil, colored pencil, photomechanical print, wooden board, umbrella, and funnel on canvas
81 × 63 inches
205.7 × 160 centimeters

Untitled, 1965
Acrylic, acrylic spray paint, colored pencil, and marker on canvas
40 7/8 × 28 5/8 inches
103.9 × 72.7 centimeters

Forty-Five Degrees, 1965
Pencil, crayon, watercolor, and acrylic spray paint on canvas
36 1/4 × 48 inches
92.1 × 121.9 centimeters



The Diagram of Bottomless, 1965
Oil, acrylic, and pencil on canvas
90 1/2 × 51 3/8 inches
229.9 × 130.5 centimeters



42+, 1966
Oil and marker on canvas
60 × 48 inches
152.4 × 121.9 centimeters

Arakawa and I, 1967
Acrylic, oil, pencil, marker, and acrylic spray paint on canvas
62 × 95 inches
157.5 × 241.3 centimeters

A Portrait of Electricity, 1969
Acrylic, pencil, and marker on canvas
48 × 72 inches
121.9 × 182.9 centimeters

Landscape, 1967
Acrylic and pencil on canvas
49 × 73 inches
124.5 × 185.4 centimeters

War of the Worlde..., 1970
Acrylic, pencil, and ink on canvas
49 × 72 inches
Collection of Jasper Johns
124.5 × 182.9 centimeters

'Untitled', 1960
Pencil and colored pencil on paper
19 11/16 × 13 3/4 inches
50 × 35 centimeters

'Untitled', 1965
Pen, gouache and crayon on paperboard
19 15/16 × 16 inches
50.6 × 40.7 centimeters

Untitled, 1965
Pencil, pen, and acrylic spray paint on paper
30 1/8 × 22 1/8 inches
76.5 × 56.2 centimeters

Landscape, 1967
Pencil and watercolor on paper
26 1/4 × 40 3/16 inches
66.7 × 102.1 centimeters

Untitled, 1968
Pen, marker, and paint on paper
22 3/16 × 30 1/16 inches
56.3 × 76.4 centimers

'Untitled', 1966
Paint on paperboard
19 15/16 × 14 15/16 inches
50.6 × 37.9 centimeters

I would like to thank Homma Momoyo, Executor Director of the Reversible Destiny Foundation, and Miwako Tezuka, Associate Director, for the contagious enthusiasm they showed while working on the exhibition and on the catalog. Thank you to ST Luk and Amara Magloughlin for assisting with their research; to Kathryn Dennett, Emiko Inoue, and Jlynn Rose at the Reversible Destiny Foundation office in New York; and to Takeyoshi Matsuda and Haruka Kawaguchi at the Arakawa+GinsTokyo office. Thank you, also, to Michael Govan, a longtime friend of the artist, for sharing important information about Arakawa's work and vision.

I also like to present a special thank you to the three writers of this catalog. Professor Ignacio Adriasola introduced us to the unique world of the enigmatic titles of Arakawa's artwork. Professor Hirayoshi Yukihiro provided us with information about Arakawa prior to his arrival to the USA, helping us connect Arakawa's work in New York with the work he did in Tokyo as a young artist. Although much has been said about the relation between Arakawa and Duchamp, nobody had ever before been able to investigate it with the depth that Professor Julia Robinson offers.

It is common to divide Arakawa's work into two moments: pre-New York and post-New York. This conceptual framework had already formed during the life of the artist. By 1970, Suga Kishio writes, "[the fact] that an artist like Arakawa Shūsaku while in Japan was making objects of doubtful taste such as coffins, and after arriving to the United States with a sudden change started to do diagram art, is indicative of the difference between Eastern and Western way of thinking" (*Jōtai wo koete aru* [Beyond Condition]).

Many consider Arakawa's "coffins" more interesting than the paintings he started to do in New York City, and tend to dismiss this later work. However, the paintings Arakawa did in 1962 soon after arriving in New York have a unique importance. It was then, living in the loft at 112 Chambers Street and sharing a close friendship with Robert Morris, that he produced a group of works titled "The Forming of Untitled." It was a time in which young artists in New York City were investigating the possibilities of painting, by challenging the boundaries of the medium. Arakawa was one of them and took an active part in this conversation. I hope the exhibition succeeded in bringing this aspect of Arakawa's work back to the attention of the art community.

BBC

Cover: Madeline Gins, "A Line is a Crack, Separated Continuums, Early Lines Paintings Untitled" draft, late 1980s, Reversible Destiny Foundation Archives.

Japanese artists and authors in this catalogue are noted in Japanese form, with family names followed by given names. An exception is made for artists and authors, such as Yoko Ono, who reside in the United States and are known by their given name first. Arakawa Shūsaku decided to only go by Arakawa after moving to the United States.

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This catalogue was published on the occasion of the exhibition *Arakawa: A Line Is a Crack*, September 7–November 23, 2023.

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