



田名網敬一
記憶の冒険

Keiichi Tanaami
Adventures in Memory

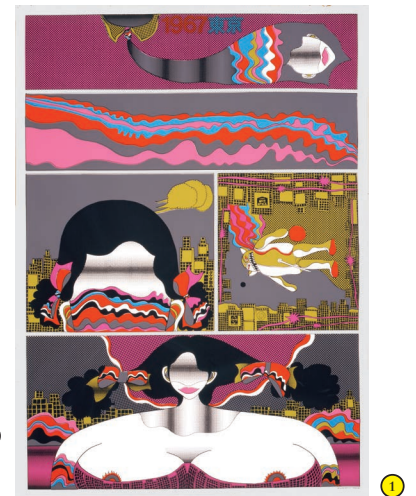
国立新美術館 企画展 正作
2024年8月7日(水) - 11月11日(日)

田名網敬一 記憶の冒険

Keiichi Tanaami
Adventures in Memory

Exhibition Outline

This exhibition is the first major retrospective showcasing the internationally acclaimed artist Keiichi Tanaami (b. 1936). Tanaami is known for vivid, color-drenched works that intensely reflect his childhood memories of World War II and the impact of the American pop culture he encountered after the war. The exhibition presents an array of works by the astoundingly productive artist, including archival materials from past decades, tracing the entirety of Tanaami's creative journey over more than 60 years. This unprecedented, comprehensive exploration of Tanaami's oeuvre is organized around the theme of "memory."



After enrolling in the college of design at Musashino Art University, Tanaami befriended avant-garde artists such as Ushio Shinohara, Genpei Akasegawa, and Shusaku Arakawa, and was exposed to their cutting-edge activities. In 1957, while still a student, he won a special selection award at the Japan Advertising Art Exhibition, held by the Japan Advertising Artists Club. He began taking on design jobs while still enrolled in school, and joined the Hakuhodo ad agency after graduating. After about two years he left Hakuhodo and became independent, not only holding gallery exhibitions but also publishing a collection of works in 1966 titled *A Portrait of Keiichi Tanaami*, which can be described as the starting point of his career as an artist. Profoundly inspired by Andy Warhol's approach to art and design, which refused to be limited to any one medium, he came to describe himself as an "image director." Tanaami went on to prolifically produce silkscreened posters (①), collages, animations, illustrations, paintings and more (② , ③).



- ① *Realm of the Afterlife/Realm of the Living*, 2017
Pigmented ink, acrylic silkscreen medium, crashed glass, glitter, acrylic paint on canvas
217 x 300 cm (3 canvases)
- ① *1967 TOKYO*, 1967
Silkscreen print on paper
103 x 72.8 cm
- ② *Wonder Woman*, 1967
Ink, collage on paper
38.5 x 48.5 cm
- ③ *Gold Fish*, 1973
Acrylic on illustration board
36.4 x 51.5 cm

By the late 1960s, Keiichi Tanaami was engaged in editorial design for numerous magazines covering music, movies, and literature, and in 1975 he became the first art director of the monthly magazine *PLAYBOY* (Japanese edition). Around the same time, he also began producing experimental films and holding screenings with filmmaker Toshio Matsumoto, steadily expanding the scope of his creative endeavors.

田名網敬一 記憶の冒険

Keiichi Tanaami
Adventures in Memory

A trip to China, and hallucinations he experienced during a four-month hospitalization in 1981, inspired him to produce images reminiscent of Oriental paradises and fantastical labyrinths in the 1980s (④, ⑤, ⑥). In 1991 Tanaami became a professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design, where he has helped to foster artists of younger generations.



④



⑤



⑥

Around 2000, Tanaami began combining various motifs appearing in his earlier works to create even more complex and dynamic images (⑦, ⑧). For Tanaami, creating art is a process of tracing past memories and seeking to interpret how these memories have evolved within him at a subconscious level.



⑦



⑧

At the age of 87, Keiichi Tanaami continues to create with undimmed energy, enthraling artists and designers of many generations and nationalities and receiving a deluge of requests for collaborations. This can be attributed to his inimitable sensibilities and continuous renewal of his style and methodologies over more than six decades of activity. Recently, Tanaami has gained growing international recognition as a postwar Japanese artist who interprets global culture in a truly distinctive manner, and his works are in the collections of such institutions such as The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA) (USA), the Walker Art Center (USA), the Art Institute of Chicago (USA), M+ (Hong Kong), and the Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie für Gegenwart (Germany).

This exhibition offers a long-awaited opportunity for viewers to immerse themselves in the world of Tanaami's works, which resemble mind-bending collages of memory and imagination, boldly synthesizing truth and fiction and continuing to surge in popularity and critical appraisal.

- ④ *Frederik Ruysch - Theater of Internal Organs*, 1987
Acrylic on canvas
145.5 x 145.5 cm
- ⑤ *Passage (B)*, 1986
Acrylic, color pencil on paper mounted on canvas
130.5 x 130.5 cm
- ⑥ *The House in Ascension (C)*, 1986
Wood, lacquer
100 x 63.5 x 24 cm
- ⑦ *Chirico's Theater*, 2009
Acrylic on canvas
194 x 145.5 cm
- ⑧ *Presence*, 2022
Digital canvas print, magazine scrap, ink,
acrylic paint, rhinestone on canvas
194 x 130 cm

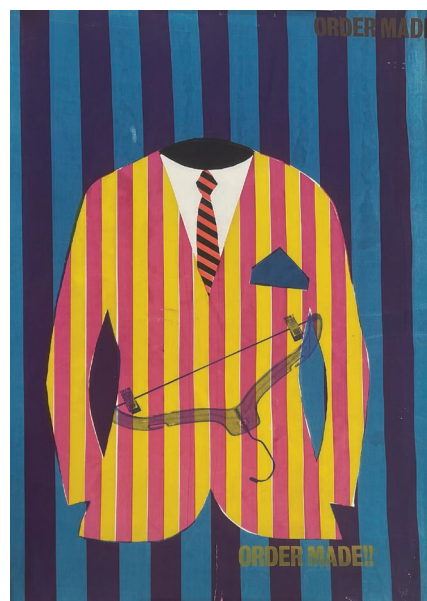
田名網敬一 記憶の冒険

Keiichi Tanaami
Adventures in Memory

Highlights

1 Works Intimately Intertwined with Japan's Postwar Cultural History

The works on view include *ORDER MADE!!* Series(1965) (⑨ , ⑩), which drew inspiration from Andy Warhol and was one of the first examples of Japanese Pop Art; *NO MORE WAR* Series(1967), a finalist in an anti-Vietnam War poster contest held by the American magazine *Avant Garde*; and the animation *Good-by Marilyn* (1971), created using collage techniques for the TV program *11PM*. These and many other works illuminate the counterculture that blossomed in Japan after World War II.



2 An Ever-Flowing Fountain of Memories

In recent years, Tanaami has produced numerous works with themes drawn from his own memories and dreams. Childhood experiences in wartime, and a severe and life-threatening illness, have been significant catalysts for his focus on memories magnified in the mind, reflecting the idea that “people unconsciously alter their own memories as they go through life.” Titled *Adventures in Memory*, the exhibition features new works exhibited for the first time (⑪), as well as dream diaries which Tanaami has kept sporadically since the 1970s, drawings (⑫), and related installations (⑬), revealing the inexhaustible wellspring of his creativity.



- ⑨ *ORDER MADE!!*, 1965
Silkscreen print on paper
78.9 x 109.4 cm
- ⑩ *ORDER MADE!!*, 1965
Silkscreen print on paper
101 x 73cm
- ⑪ *Law of the Forest*, 2024
Pigmented ink, acrylic silkscreen medium,
crashed glass, glitter, acrylic paint on canvas
250 x 200 cm
- ⑫ *Goldfish*, 1982
Ink, color pencil on paper
56.5 x 76.4 cm
- ⑬ Installation View:
Keiichi Tanaami, *Memorial Reconstruction*, NANZUKA,
Tokyo, 2020

田名網敬一 記憶の冒険 Keiichi Tanaami Adventures in Memory

3 An Astounding Array of Collaborations

Throughout his long career, Tanaami has worked for a remarkable range of clients and with an extraordinary lineup of collaborators. These have included fashion brands, including Mary Quant, adidas (14), JUNYA WATANABE, and Ground Y, and musicians, such as GENERATIONS from EXILE TRIBE, Aki Yashiro, and RADWIMPS (15). He has also worked with iconic characters like Ultraman and joined forces with the late manga artist Fujio Akatsuka (16), with whom he had a friendship. The exhibition highlights Tanaami's achievements as a designer, showing his deep commitment to collaboration since the earliest days of his career, as well as his approach to producing new works through synergies generated by partnerships.



14 *The Kingdom of Dream*, 2018
Pigmented ink, acrylic silkscreen medium, crashed glass, glitter, acrylic paint on canvas
140 x 100 x 4 cm

15 *Artwork for Radwimps World Tour*, 2024

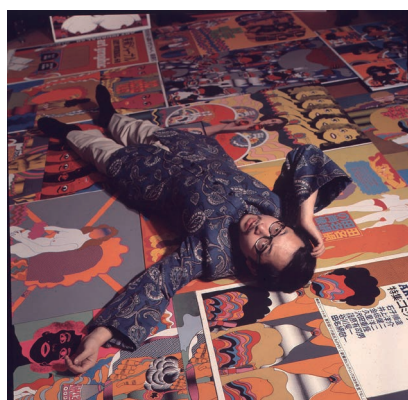
16 *Kaboom*, 2022
Pigmented ink, acrylic silkscreen medium, crashed glass, glitter, acrylic paint on canvas
149 x 100 cm



Profile

Keiichi Tanaami

Born in Tokyo in 1936, and graduated from Musashino Art University. Keiichi Tanaami has achieved unparalleled recognition for his interdisciplinary activities, as an art director, experimental filmmaker, animator and artist. Tanaami's recent solo exhibitions include *PARAVENTI: KEIICHI TANAAMI* (Prada Aoyama, Tokyo, Japan, 2023), *Manhattan Universe* (Venus Over Manhattan, New York, USA, 2022), *A Mirror of the World* (NANZUKA UNDERGROUND, Tokyo, Japan, 2022), *Keiichi Tanaami* (Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland, 2019), *Keiichi Tanaami* (Jeffrey Deitch, New York, 2019). He is internationally acclaimed as a pioneer of Pop Art in Japan, with work featured in retrospective surveys with a global scope such as *International Pop* (Walker Art Center, Dallas Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA, 2015-2016) and *The World Goes Pop* (Tate Modern, London, UK, 2015). Tanaami's works are housed in numerous public collections including The Museum of Modern Art (USA), Walker Art Center (USA), The Art Institute of Chicago (USA), M+ (Hong Kong), National Portrait Gallery (USA), and Hamburger Bahnhof (Germany).



17 Portrait at
Keiichi Tanaami Poster Illustration Exhibition,
Shibuya Seibu, Tokyo, 1968

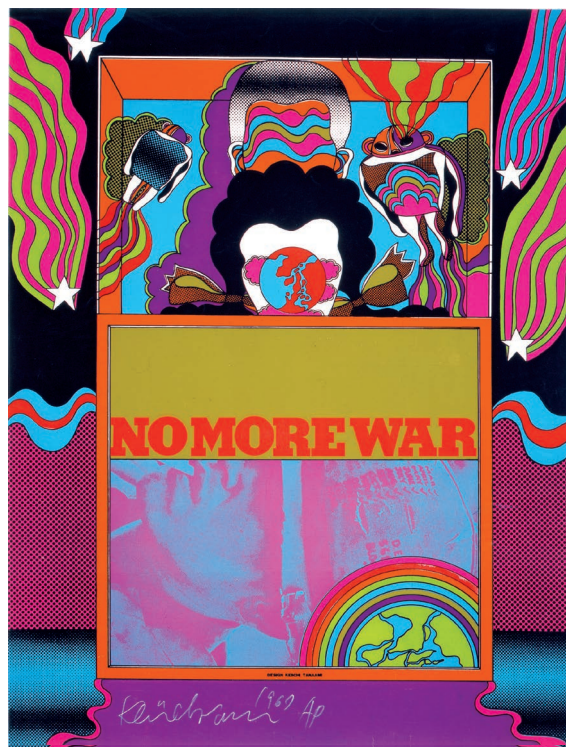
18 Portrait at
PARAVENTI: KEIICHI TANAAMI, Prada Aoyama,
2023



Descriptions of Works

NO MORE WAR Series, 1967

While still a student, Tanaami began exploring various means of reaching a broader audience with his works, and became increasingly interested in techniques of reproduction such as printing and printmaking. Influenced by American comics and Pop Art, he began working with silkscreen in the mid-1960s. His works in the medium include this series, which he submitted to an anti-war poster contest organized in 1968 by the American magazine *Avant Garde*, where it was selected as an outstanding work. Tanaami's halftone backgrounds, appropriations of photographs, and comic-inspired layouts not only highlight his interest in reproduction through print, but also showcase his sublime command, as a designer, of layout and color usage.



19

Good-by Marilyn, 1971

Since childhood, Tanaami has maintained a keen interest in film, and he began producing animated works in the mid-1960s. In the early 1970s, he was commissioned by television programs to produce several animations. One notable work features repeated images of hot dogs, bananas, and Marilyn Monroe in eroticized scenes that unfold over four and a half minutes. Images of the Statue of Liberty and Disney characters, along with cutouts from pornography, are interspersed throughout, delivering a singular interpretation of American popular culture. However, as the title hints, around this time Tanaami began gradually distancing himself from American iconography, shifting the focus of his work towards his own memories. This work can be said to represent a transitional phase of his career.



20

- ①⑨ NO MORE WAR, 1967
Silkscreen print on paper
63 x 48 cm
- ②⑩ Good-by Marilyn, 1971
Color animated 16mm Film
4min 25sec

田名網敬一 記憶の冒険 Keiichi Tanaami Adventures in Memory

Tokiwa-matsu Series, 1986-87

In 1981, Tanaami was diagnosed with tuberculosis and hospitalized for nearly four months. Hovering between life and death, he experienced a long series of intense nightly hallucinations due to the strong side effects of medication. These visions included recurring imagery such as the Salvador Dalí painting *The Madonna of Port Lligat*, and the pine trees in the hospital garden appeared to him to be twisted and contorted. Tanaami documented what he saw in more than ten notebooks, and these vivid hallucinations while hospitalized propelled him in new creative directions. A visit to China in 1980 had already reignited his interest in Asian culture, and in the 1980s he began depicting fantastical worlds, evocative of mysterious spiritual paradises and labyrinths, that combined images of pine trees and artificial urban landscapes.



The Story of Death and Rebirth, 2019

This jaw-droppingly colorful work comprises motifs deeply linked to Tanaami's childhood memories of wartime. For the artist, death has been a crucial theme and a continual source of creative energy. Here, numerous fighter planes sink into the sea while sprite-like creatures float in midair, presenting a vision of a chaotic world that evokes the cycle of reincarnation. In terms of technique, in the 2000s Tanaami began working with digital data, which enabled him to amplify images infinitely across various media. His ability to seamlessly introduce images into videos and sculptures further illuminates the protean nature of his talent, which has been increasingly notable in recent years.



- ②① Tokiwa-matsu (A), 1986
Silk screen print on paper
103 x 73 cm
- ②② Tokiwa-matsu (F), 1986
Silk screen print on paper
103 x 73 cm
- ②③ The Story of Death and Rebirth, 2019
Pigmented ink, acrylic silkscreen medium,
crashed glass, glitter, acrylic paint on canvas
200 x 400 cm (4 canvases)

Pleasure of Picasso – Mother and Child Series, 2020 – ongoing

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world, it also brought changes to Tanaami's practice. With scheduled exhibitions and other plans disrupted, Tanaami began using some of his newfound free time to copy Pablo Picasso's *Mother and Child*, a painting he has long admired. He initially intended to make about ten copies, but the number steadily grew, and to date he has produced over 500 works. Tanaami, who has said that constraints stimulate his creativity, has developed his own narrative over the course this series by incorporating diverse images into the basic format of Picasso's *Mother and Child*. For Tanaami, this series is akin to the Buddhist practice of transcribing sutras, and it continues to be a part of his daily routine.



24



25

Inconceivable Body, 2019

This sculpture consists of a stack of faces, each with a powerful gaze that seems to penetrate the viewer. A complex amalgamation of skulls, spiders, chickens, goldfish, undulating pine trees and other imagery is synthesized into a single entity that appears to be thrumming with life force. Tanaami has described the bizarrely shaped creatures that he frequently portrays as people wounded in wars, and as embodiments of the fearless side of all human beings. Since the 2000s, he has been making sculptures inspired by Buddhist statues such as the Thousand-Armed Kannon, and he has spoken of an “enduring fascination with menacing, shape-shifting sacred icons.” This piece is among those resembling an aberrant Buddhist statue, depicting creatures from the Buddhist paradise of the Pure Land as envisioned by Tanaami.



26

- 24 *Pleasure of Picasso - Mother and Child No. 005, 2020/2021*
Acrylic on canvas
41 x 31.8 x 2 cm
- 25 *Pleasure of Picasso - Mother and Child No. 024, 2020/2021*
Acrylic on canvas
30 x 30 x 3.7 cm
- 26 *Inconceivable Body, 2019*
Fiberglass reinforced plastics, iron, acrylic and urethane paint, gold plating
300 x 100 x 100 cm

田名網敬一 記憶の冒険

Keiichi Tanaami
Adventures in Memory

Overview

Exhibition Title	Keiichi Tanaami: Adventures in Memory
Period	August 7 (Wed), 2024 – November 11 (Mon), 2024 Closed on Tuesdays
Opening Hours	10:00-18:00 (Fridays and Saturdays, 10:00-20:00) (Last admission 30 minutes before closing)
Venue	The National Art Center, Tokyo Special Exhibition Gallery 1E
Organized by	The National Art Center, Tokyo; The Asahi Shimbun; Japan Arts Council; Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan
With the sponsorship of	Shueisha; adidas; MATTEL CREATIONS™
Production cooperation	Sony Music Entertainment
With the cooperation of	NANZUKA
With the support of	J-WAVE

Admission (tax included)

2,000 yen (Adults) 1,400 yen (College students) 1,000 yen (High school students)

*Visitors who are junior high school students or younger will be admitted for free.

*Disabled persons (along with the one assistant) will be admitted for free upon presenting the Disabled Person's Booklet or an equivalent form of government-issued ID.

*More information on tickets will be posted at a later date on the exhibition website.

国立新美術館
THE NATIONAL ART CENTER, TOKYO

朝日新聞社

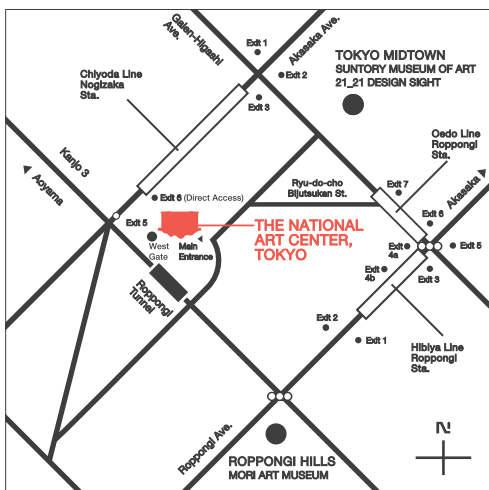
日本博 JAPAN CULTURAL EXPO 2.0

令和6年度日本博2.0事業(委託型)

集英社



MATTEL CREATIONS®



Access

7-22-2 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-8558

Tokyo Metro Chiyoda Line / Nogizaka Station / Direct access from Exit 6

Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line / Roppongi Station / Approximately 5-minute walk from Exit 4a

Toei Oedo Subway Line / Roppongi Station / Approximately 4-minute walk from Exit 7

Inquiries

(+81) 47-316-2772 (Hello Dial)

Website

<https://www.nact.jp/english/>

Official Instagram

@tanaami2024



Press Contact

The National Art Center, Tokyo - Public Relations

E-mail: pr@nact.jp