



Lecture "Modern Art and Mimeograph: From the Dawn to the Next Dawn"

Lecturer: Hisami UENO (Curator, The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama)

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Thank you for having me today. My name is Hisami Ueno, Chief Curator of The Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama. I am pleased to join an opening of atelier ceremony for Ms. Tomoko Kanzaki. First of all, please allow me to tell you how I got involved in study of mimeograph in Wakayama. The chance started when posthumous works of Takejiro Shimizu were stored in bulk in 2006. He ran a printing studio in Wakayama and also engaged himself as a writer. At that time, we didn't know that there was such person who was involved in group activities in Wakayama.

This is how the investigation started. I got hold of his works physically respectively and checked how they were made. I collected tools and material and created sheets of stencil paper, as Ms. Kanzaki did. I found that it was very interesting with the techniques, effects, and history.

They stemmed from the same origin. We opened some special exhibitions and published in workshops to place each art work and the artist in art history.

I am writing on mimeograph as well. Currently I am engaged in making a lexicon of Japanese printmakers named "The List of Printmakers". The list includes artists who made prints in mimeograph. Unfortunately, it is not much about the postwar period when it gathered attention, as the focus is prewar time. I am planning to publish on

another occasion.

As you see, I have given some example of our exhibitions, and mimeograph prints are seen in ordinary one. On this side, you find the works of Toyohide Iwane, who ran a printing studio and made printings himself in Hikone. And the interior of works, they were made of Soji Wakayama, who led the Shudo Association to study and find out how mimeograph was supposed to be with younger artists. They established the measure of works and exchanged their opinions monthly. These are works of Takejiro Shimizu. In 1960's when mimeograph was in a golden era and new material was actively developed. Artists accepted the trend and utilized it for creative expressions realized. Shimizu was one of those and he exhibited his works in Society for National Painting (Kokugakai). It helped him to build up his position.

Shimizu's early work was found here. It is one of our first mimeograph collections as well.

Originally it was found in the collection of Koshiro Onchi. Onchi initiated an association called "Ichimokukai" and he and younger artists gathered on the first Thursday of every month for study session. I suppose the work came to Onchi via Soji Wakayama, and the original taste was found in magazines such as "Atarashiki Mura (New Village)" and the technical periodical

"Tousha Bunka (Mimeograph Culture)".

It was the prewar time when Shimizu first met mimeograph. I assume this is the oldest of his works. In 1938, he worked as a teacher after graduating from a normal school (teachers training college). At that time, he learned the techniques for mimeograph

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和歌山県立近代美術館 最初の模写版画コレクション

under Isamu Okuyama, who was a good master of platemaking. Shortly after the war, Okuyama and Shimizu launched a workshop called "Kagikyu Kobo (Snail Studio)". In front of the piece, there is a picture of a treasure ship. It was a copy of direct mails for Wakayama Art Association of Mimeograph, which both Okuyama and Shimizu joined. Presumably the painting was done by Okuyama. Please have a look at the picture next, an adorable snail was on a direct mail for "Kagikyu Kobo (Snail Studio)" and it was created by Shimizu, as his signature "Take" is found. In those days, Shimizu considered mimeograph as a tool to express himself. It was "the Creative Illustration Designs", which he first published in the studio.

If you may have already known, mimeograph enables you to print both letters and designs on waxed stencil paper. The

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demands for pleasant designs between the blanks have had those design books happen. It may be still available in antiquarian bookshops.

No need to repeat that the stencil plate is quite analog because nowhere is blocked and the ink comes from the holes, though it might look rather digital.

No needs for electricity, large factories or huge machinery. All

required are files, stencil papers and styluses, as Ms. Kanzaki has been exhibiting here. Even if you don't have a printer, a frame with a stretched cloth for silk screen, which is commercially available, will do. Furthermore, it is also possible. Cut and make a frame with a sheet of cardboard then put stencil paper.

This is the stencil paper to start with the print. Allegedly it is hard to get nowadays, but if you have a chance to travel to the provinces, try to visit some old local stationery shops.

Surprisingly, they often have. I collect material and hold a workshop with approx. thirty people. Everyone can if he/she wants. It should be done still. We are facing a turning point now, because the material may disappear, as the number of people who know what it is in reality has been decreasing. The first mimeograph in Japan was developed and released in 1894 by Horii Sekido. This is the pamphlet and the instruction manual at that time. You see the mechanism is almost the



same as now. The only difference might be that it didn't have a silk screen. This was made as a print sample at Horii. It mentioned that both letters and illustrations were available for platemaking, but the illustrations were quite simple. On the contrary, Bando Internment Camp in Tokushima, where the German captive were interned during the war, made the multi-color printing happen. It was done by printers of Horii. Some people might have used first in Japan, but some of them had detailed knowledge of lithography. You can see many of their products in the Naruto German House. They even made stamps and bills circulated in the Internment Camp. It is Shudoshi Sakamoto who studies and reproduces their elaborate works.

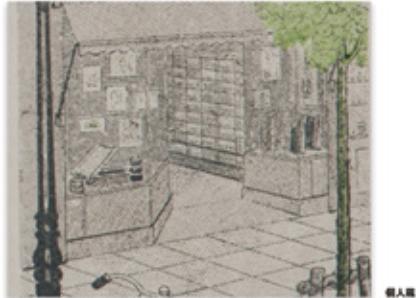
Mimeograph became familiar to people in general after Horii's patent had expired. As the structure was simple, it was easy for everyone to reproduce. Let me first tell you about the spread in Kansai area. In 1919, the Sankodo located in ShinSekai (New

板東停車場収容所 1917-19 (大正6-8)



山形県写真資料館

関東での體写版の普及
體写印刷店のショーウィンドー
佐藤兄弟商会1931年カタログより



World), Osaka, was the first shop launching the business. The shop had a show window with a beautiful sample of printings. The same was also found in Tokyo. This is a drawing for storefront of Sato Bros & Co. Many samples were lined up behind with a printing machine of mimeograph inside of a glass window. This drawing was included in a corporate brochure and the instruction itself was a great printing. Yoshitaka Sagawa seemed to manage that. The shop was not only for selling machines, but also introducing the techniques and research.

These are monthly reports for Showado including both pre/post war time. I am not sure if any other newspaper to promote sales lasted for such a long time. In addition to vendors' efforts, some schools were also established, Japan Art Academy for Mimeograph, for instance. The newspapers were available and they were type-printings due to the large number of circulation. Those main people in mimeograph history were teachers at the Academy. Hiroyuki Arimura, Kiyomi Akutagawa, and Yoshitaka Sagawa. This photograph was taken to commemorate a course

『昭和堂月報』創刊号 昭和8年9月



of lectures. In the rear row, you see Kyohei Kusama.

Please have a look at the works of Yoshitaka Sagawa. The calendar on your left was made by the Showa Tousha Do

日本體写藝術院
1930(昭和5)創立

『體写研究』、技術書を発行
作品審査会、講習会の開催



(Showa Mimeograph Co.), the company is now known as a printing company called Showa.

This is one of his representative works. The picture on your right is the original, so you might think this is just a copy. How should we appreciate a copy and creativity? I would rather like you to focus on following factors to enjoy his creativity; the original picture was a Ukiyo-e painting (a style of color picture in the Edo period), painted by Kiyonaga Torii, and Sagawa modified in a mimeograph version. The original picture showed a summer season with wisteria, but he converted it into a winter scene with floating snow. A look of woman in the picture is showing signs of winter. I think this is one good example of sincere works. It might not be easy to figure out, this mimeograph originated in oil painting. Kyohei Kusama was excellent in reproducing especially via mimeograph. A picture with multi-color was

草間京平
「昭和體写堂
1953年度カレンダー」



参考：向阪清氏 桂林

realized by laying over slates. This was made for a lecture class. This matted red version contains Atari (space to indicate position), outlined borderlines between colors. Each version was printed with Atari and when the process done by laying over slates, as seen at the bottom right.

Akutagawa, who was in the commemorative photo, invented a Gothic font to fit with mimeograph. Truly his works are great and comfortable to read. Yokichi Koizumi also worked out for



fonts in Kansai. His Gothic style was named "Pilot Printing" , using a ruler in celluloid.

Koizumi also was a graphic artist. The original picture on the cover of "Toushaban (Mimeograph Printing)" , was Suibokuga (ink-wash painting) created by a painter. The painter appreciated that Koizumi' s work was more attractive than the original and it was truly creative, not a copy. Here' s another example of Koizumi' s work. The ink running was represented finely using main lines for ink for black covers. He expressed how the ink ran on Japanese paper. "Toushaban" published for a long time, but went out of existence, because the paper for the work became unavailable gradually and he was too busy in his studio.

Meets TO-SHA
□「近代美術と版画展-黎明から次の黎明へ-」



"Kohan(Stencil)" by Soji Wakayama took over works of "Toushaban" , I heard.

"Toushaban" of Yokichi Koizumi was published in Kansai, but its readers were widespread thorough the country. For the reason, it still happens to be available in lantiquarian bookshops of various districts. Koizumi recommended sosaku-hanga (creative print art) to his readers. As already shown, he aimed to make techniques of mimeograph universal and produce and promote art prints. Soji

Wakayama exhibited his works while publishing "Koban" taking over Koizumi' s ideas to improve mimeograph as printng techniques. Initially, the woodcut artists considered his works not interesting as mimeograph, because they were pretty similar to woodcut print.

Here are comments by various graphic artists, such as Senpan Maekawa, Hide Kawanishi, Un' ichi Hiratsuka, Koshiro Onchi who mainly were engaged in woodcut print. Yusei Ita from Tottori commented most severely. Ita worked with mimeograph and here' s one of his pieces. In addition to the technique of "Tsubushi printing" , making plates with filing equally, it is interesting because he used stencil sheet, cutting out for plate, similarly as Isekata paper, which is used for dyeing and weaving. I wondered if the stencil paper is strong enough and tried out. It turned out quite difficult because it tore easily when printing with roller as Ita often complained.

Shimizu also published a magazin named "Tousha Bunka (Mimeograph Culture). Originally the magazine focused on essays and introduction of technology, and it gradually shited to a printmaking magazine. Shimizu exibited those printings with this soft atmosphere at that time. Woodcut print wouldn' t make it happen. This rough and vague taste is very unique.

Shimizu greedily seeked to improve the effects. Here' s a mimeograph work by Toyohide Iwane, who interacted with Shimizu and ran a mimeograph studio named "Sunrise Studio" in Hikone. The ideas of vagueness and softness would be keys to understand mimeograph, since previously it had been thought as weakness. Shimizu and Iwane found it unique and possible. Here' s another piece, created by Joichi Hoshi. He was a graphic arttist who shifted to woodcut later in his life.

The passion of those motivated artists led to holding exhibitions. One of those activities was "Kohan Gaten" (Exhibition of Stencil Printed Pictures), for example. I would like you to see the name of artists there, Soji Wakayama, Takejiro Shimizu, Toyohide Iwane and some oil painters included. Tatsuoki Namba, Masao Tsuruoka, for example. Shimizu and Iwane seemed to encourage other artists to engage themselves in mimeograph due to its attractiveness. Star artists also appeared while more and more artists were interested in mimeograph. One of the stars was Ryonosuke Fukui, he was a nephew to Boro Nukaga, who ran a studio for mimeograph printing. Fukui made his pieces assisting his uncle's studio. Those stencil pictures were collected and a book of painting was published. It was well recognized from those days, and it still keeps its freshness.

The book of painting made Fukui a well-appreciated artist. This is to show how his techniques were. This was an English



book for a private school. The contents of this beautiful book were incubated by the teachers and the mimeograph technologists realized.

Boro Nukaga handled with the letters, and Fukui managed the pictures.

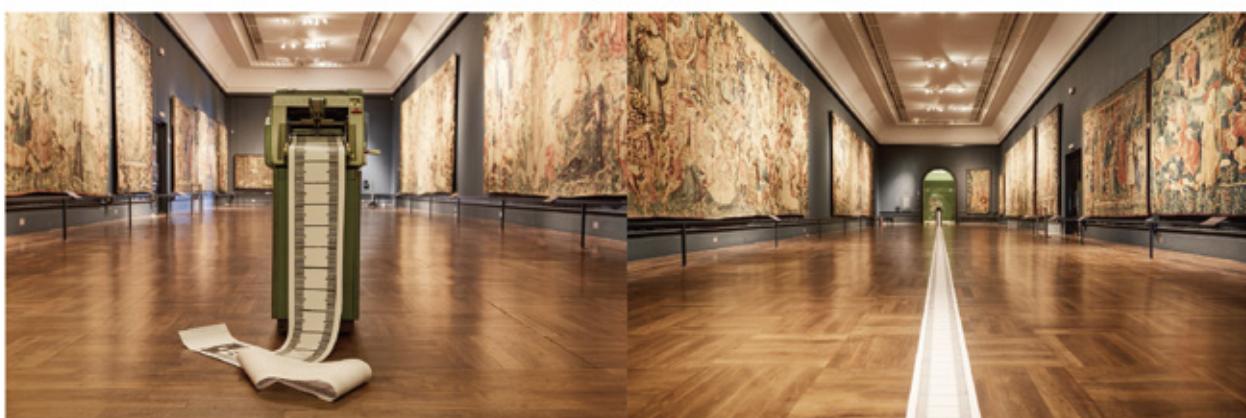
Fukui's works became more sophisticated after that.

Unfortunately, most of his pictures are not left in Japan, as people in America brought them back to home. Some other works here, made in 1957 and 1959. There started an

exhibition in 1957 named International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo. Print works were collected from all over the world and exhibited. Fukui was invited to join and his pieces were displayed. Soji Wakayama as well. You can say that mimeograph was recognized internationally, but its technologies didn't seem to travel overseas. These were Wakayama's works exhibited outside of Japan. Takejiro Shimizu also tried the abstract out on his work after interacting with Soji Wakayama. Shimizu launched "Association to Commemorate 80 Years for Printing in Wakayama" and held a gallery every year so that young artists were able to show their activities. But Shimizu himself never told them to work on mimeograph. Presumably he respected what each artist wanted to do.

Once you see those pieces and material data, you will strongly feel like introducing the art to the world. As mentioned initially our exhibitions is it. I visited the University of Westminster in London February and published on Japanese mimeograph with eagerness. Many listeners got interested in my release, because type platemaking is dominant in Europe and America and the printing is done by running a Gestetner rotary press, unlike Japanese mimeograph, both platemaking and printing are handled manually.

This is a deliverable of Alt Går Bra, a group from Norway. It is an installation of mimeograph exhibited in Victoria and Albert Museum. Some people will choose mimeograph as a way of new expression. We are able to keep connected with them, as long as we continuously publish something on mimeograph. It may be interesting. I believe it is our responsibility to watch over mimeograph and think about it in response to changing times, for those who were engaged in the technology and the art up to now and succeed to future generations.



Alt Går Bra at the V&A, 2019 © Alt Går Bra