

柚木沙弥郎の作品について考察（1948-2021）

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柚木沙弥郎は芹沢銈介に師事し、民藝工芸の領域で活動を始めた染織作家である。1948年以降、型染や注染の技法から、版画、絵画、イラストレーションへと知識を広げ、数々の作品を生み出した。柳宗悦の民藝論に強く触発されたこともあり、柚木はキャリアの早い段階で工芸の世界に専心できた。しかしながら、上述の技法に不自由さを感じだしたことで、さらには外国旅行の経験によって、彼は次第に、民藝から離れて「芸術」に向かった。そしてその結果、複数の領域で彼独自の作品が生み出された。今回の調査では、これらの変化が起こったときの彼のキャリアの結節点を明らかにすることを目指した。1948年から2021年までの期間を対象として、さらに民藝論との比較から考察を進めた。参照した柚木の作品を、本、カタログ、ウェブサイトなど、複数の情報源から収集し、作成年、技術、ジャンルに応じて分類した。このデータベースには、作品の様式変化とともに、柚木に関わるテキストや評論などを付記したので、作家の変化に対する理解を深めることが出来るだろう。

On Samiro Yunoki's artworks (1948-2021)

Rosanna Rios Perez

Introduction

In an attempt to categorize Samiro Yunoki's work throughout his career, it seemed natural to group his work under different categories by year; technique; genre or field. Each category is described and discussed while referring to an image database created by Rosanna Rios Perez, which was extracted from various books and articles on Yunoki's work and references found on the artist's website as well as other relevant websites.

Arranging Yunoki's artwork in groups sheds some light on the changes in his work and the points of inflection in his expression that marked new approaches in his career, especially when new techniques were introduced, when the works changed from two-dimensional to three-dimensional, or when the genre or field of creation shifted beyond the context of crafts.

Taking the previous observations into account, new groups corresponding to the major time periods and creative movements of Yunoki's career were created: Mingei (1948-1966); Travel and printmaking (1967-1999); and Art and Design (2000-2021). In the next sections, these three groups will be discussed as major accomplishments in Yunoki's life and career. Yunoki's family roots and upbringing are briefly introduced, followed by a description of the time periods related to his creative career, and concluding with a summary of

the most important observations devised from this thorough review of his work.

1. Samiro Yunoki's family and roots

The Yunoki family came from the small town of Tamashima in Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture. This area is known for warm weather and a nearby port facing the Seto Sea. During the Kanbun era, Samiro Yunoki's ancestor was appointed to work with Katsuma Itakura, then the lord of Bitchu-Matsuyama, and he stayed with family members in the old residence (*Saisotei*) that still exists today. Since they lived relatively close to the harbor and the area was a prolific commercial town open to trade and cultural exchange, the Yunoki residence became the cultural center of Tamashima, with many literary artists visiting frequently (Fujita 1984, 163-164).

Samiro Yunoki's grandfather, Gyokuson, experienced the rise of Tamashima culture after the Meiji era. Gyokuson was a poet and calligrapher as well as an artist who learned *Nanga* from *Kotetsubai* (胡鉄梅), a Chinese painter who lived in Japan in the late Meiji era and became a great influence for *nanga* painters.

Gyokuson's son Hisata (Samiro Yunoki's father) became a Western-style painter and traveled to France in 1911 to study at the Jean Paul Lawrence Academy. After traveling and studying in France, Hisata Yunoki returned to Japan and moved with

all of his family members to Tabata, Tokyo. In 1922, Samiro, Hisata's third son, was born. While living in Tokyo, Hisata studied Western painting at the Pacific Painting Society (太平洋画会研究所) where he was a central painter, and participated recurrently in the Imperial Academy Art exhibition (Fujita 1984, 164).

When Gyokuson passed away in 1943, Hisata decided to return to his family home after the war, where he played a leading role in the Okayama Art Society (岡山画壇) until his death in 1965. Many writers and artists lived in Tabata around the end of the Meiji era; Samiro Yunoki was surrounded by an artistic atmosphere during his childhood there. Tabata was an ordinary rural village in the Tokyo suburbs, but stood out as a Cultural Village (文士村) because of the artists who flocked there at the start of the Taisho era. Indeed, when Akutagawa Ryuunosuke, a renowned novelist of that era, moved to Tabata's *Higashidori* in 1911, it was established that many artists and writers would settle in the area (Fujita 1984, 165).

Surrounded by this artistic atmosphere, Samiro Yunoki created his own universe. Although his health was fragile as a child, and he didn't attend elementary school as regularly as other children, he found comfort in games, stories that he heard on the radio and later illustrated, an 8mm French projector called Patty Baby, and rattle games made with cans and other objects (Yunoki 2003, "Upbringing").

As he reached adolescence, his health became stronger and he began to explore nature. When he attended Matsumoto High School from 1940 until 1942, he would often go on hikes. During the two years that he lived in Matsumoto City, he built a special connection with nature and the city, a particularly important crafts center that greatly influenced his eventual entry into crafts (Muto et al., 2020, 129).

In 1942, Samiro Yunoki decided to enter the University of Tokyo to study Art History. This

decision was probably prompted by his family's artistic background and his childhood connections to the art world. However, when the student mobilization took place in 1943, Yunoki was drafted to become a soldier and his university studies were suddenly halted. After the war ended, he had to return to his family home in Kurashiki in 1945 (Takeuchi 2017, 29).

Yunoki got married in 1946 and started working at the Ohara Museum; this became a turning point for his calling as a craftsman. The times were difficult due to the aftermath of war. Sometimes, the museum had no visitors, which prompted Yunoki to explore the museum's complete collection of crafts, and carefully revise the *Kougei* and *Kougei no Michi* magazine (edited by Soetsu Yanagi) in his spare time (Yunoki 2003, "Upbringing").

Enlightened by Yanagi's theory on crafts, Yunoki decided to drop out of the University of Tokyo definitively. He was inspired by his experience in the Ohara Museum where he was surrounded by crafts and became close to working craftsmen, which built up the urge inside him to create as well. He was impressed by a calendar created by Keisuke Serizawa in 1946 (Fig.1). He wasn't sure if it was a painting or a print, because he wasn't familiar with stencil dyeing (*katazome*), but his interest in the technique brought him to visit Serizawa's house in Aoyama. Of all crafts, he was



Figure 1. Keisuke Serizawa, 1946 Calendar. (*Keisuke Serizawa's works*, 2006, 76-77).

probably more attracted to stencil dyeing because it was colorful and closer to the genre of painting (Fujita 1984, 166).

2. Mingei (1948 - 1966)

After becoming interested in the world of stencil dyeing through Serizawa's work, and with a growing desire to learn more about crafts, Yunoki began studying dyeing, and started creating *katazome* works in 1948. Yunoki's work during this time period was mainly textile work defined by patterns, which are tied to the craft ideal of repetition; he engaged in the dyeing techniques *katazome* (stencil dyeing) and *chusen* (injection dyeing) that he continued to work with over the years (Maruyama 2021, 10-11).

In order for Yunoki to better understand these dyeing techniques, Serizawa appointed him to live and learn in the dyeing house *Shosetsu Konya*, located in Shizuoka Prefecture. According to Yunoki, after he expressed to Serizawa his desire to learn craftsmanship under his guidance, Serizawa told him that it was better for him to learn with a craftsman, so he introduced him to this house.

During his stay in Shizuoka as an apprentice, Yunoki not only got a hold on dyeing skills, but got to know the life of an artisan. All members of the house were involved in dyeing: from early morning until evening, there was nothing but hard labor. According to Yunoki, the owner of the house at the time, Ukichi Yoshioka, led the family splendidly. Even in the difficult years after the war, Yoshioka had special benefits such as a free pass to sell *Ise Katagami*¹ throughout the whole country (Yunoki 2003, "Upbringing").

This apprenticeship and introduction to dyeing developed Yunoki's taste for crafts and enabled him to develop his first work. He had his first job as a dyeing artisan in Kurashiki, but it was in 1949 when he exhibited his first *katazome* dye work at the *Kokugakai* exhibition (Fig.2). Although

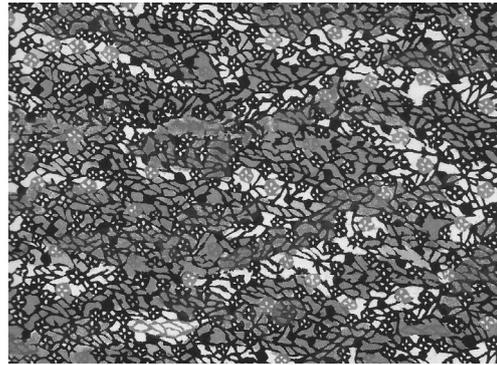


Figure 2. Samiro Yunoki, 1948, Detail of *katazome* artwork 《紅型風型染布》 443x37cm (*The Mingei* 2017, 35).

Yunoki didn't feel particularly proud of this work, exhibiting in such an important venue was a good start for his career (Fujita 1984, 166).

Yunoki's career in textiles was taking off. In 1950, he received a telegram from Professor Serizawa, which led him to travel from Kurashiki to Tokyo to become part of the teaching staff at Joshibi University of Art and Design. Serizawa taught in the Crafts department that was created in 1948, and Yunoki was called to become his successor. During this time, Yunoki met and became close to Professor Yoshitaka Yanagi, Soetsu Yanagi's nephew, who was in charge of the weaving lectures in the department.

According to Yunoki, Yoshitaka was a very kind person with a unique personality, who would encourage students to create things by making them feel confident about their ability to produce work. He and Professor Serizawa played an important role in Yunoki's deepening understanding and awareness of craft techniques. Yoshitaka was a self-taught, self-discovery weaver. He and Yunoki shared and mutually nourished their ideas about crafts. Yoshitaka became chief of the Crafts department and later Dean of Joshibi University, as Yunoki later did in 1987 (Yunoki 2003, "Joshibi Era").

Professor Serizawa only visited the university occasionally—approximately once a month—to give special lectures, for which Yunoki would assist as a

teacher. This also provided a chance for Yunoki to learn : he describes a lecture given by Professor Serizawa in the summer of 1950, when he was just starting at Joshibi University, as an opportunity to learn from his master. In Yunoki's words, the workshop involved actively engaging in various katazome technique tasks, such as making nori paste, cutting out patterns, washing fabric, all while being led by Professor Serizawa. For Professor Serizawa, the most important goal to achieve in the workshop was for participants to fully enjoy every step of the process (Yunoki 2003 "About Prof. Serizawa- Part 1").

According to Yunoki, Serizawa not only taught him katazome, but also urged his questioning of his creative process, as he was starting to feel uncomfortable about making the same thing over and over again. His mentor encouraged him to defy tradition by transcending the technical aspect of katazome and to challenge himself to create fresh work.

Serizawa's teachings stayed in Yunoki's mind and came up later in his life as he encountered crafts from different parts of the world. The beginning of his career in crafts, as we mentioned, consisted in carefully learning the technique and expressing himself through a medium. As Yunoki mentions, being under Serizawa's guidance was a time of creating work exactly as he was taught, without any subjectivity, but as the years passed and as technical experience and knowledge accumulated within Yunoki, he was able to create work with fresh expression, leading him to question his own process (Yunoki and Atsuta, 2021, 48-50).

In 1955, he held his first solo exhibition at Takumi Crafts Shop in Ginza, Tokyo, which was under Naokumi Shiga's supervision at that time. Dating back to 1932, the shop was dedicated to featuring high quality crafts that could be used in everyday life. For the exhibition, he designed a poster (fig.3) to advertise the event; this show marked Yunoki's first appearance as a textile artist, but also placed him in the center of the



Figure 3. Samiro Yunoki, 1955 Solo exhibition poster. (*Hana* 2021 summer, 1).

crafts market in Tokyo which enabled him to commercialize his work (Takeuchi 2017, 32).

Furthermore, this time period was important due to Yunoki's participation in Expo '58, which was held in Brussels, Belgium. It was his first international appearance with a textile work, for which he received a bronze award. After participating in the 23rd *Kokugakai* exhibition (23回国画会) for the first time in 1949, he became an active member of the association in 1953, which determined his annual participation in the exhibitions organized by the association until this day (Yunoki 2014, 156).

This was a period of first experiences in crafts production and exhibitions for Yunoki. His first solo exhibition at Takumi Crafts Shop led to future exhibitions in similar craft venues as well as the commercialization of his work. Important figures in Yunoki's life during this time included Soetsu Yanagi, Keitsuke Serizawa, and Yoshitaka Yanagi, among other personalities who enriched his world with ideas and possibilities within the crafts realm.

3. Travel and Printmaking (1967 - 1999)

In 1967, Yunoki travelled to Europe for the first time. Over two months, he visited several

countries including Spain, Italy and France, where he sketched daily life and things that caught his attention (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 66). This first experience of travelling outside of Japan enriched his vision and creative pursuits, and he was also able to experience his father's view of Paris from his travels in search of knowledge related to Western painting (Fujita 1984, 164).

Later in his life, in 1982, Yunoki travelled to India, where he visited four villages dedicated to handicrafts and cloth production. These villages were introduced to him by Hiroko Iwatate, Director of the Iwatate Folk Textile Museum, who also shared a passion for textiles and travelling and became a very close friend to Yunoki after receiving his guidance at Joshibi University (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 66).

Travelling to learn about old ways of dyeing and creating crafts in countries such as India, Mexico, and Turkey became a passion and a way of nourishing Yunoki's artwork. While travelling, Yunoki not only learned about local crafts, but also observed how people lived, listened to their stories, and experienced their daily lives, all of which elevated his connection to these places and enabled him to see beyond the technical aspect of crafts. (Iwatate 2017, 17).

Yunoki's insight into everyday life is particularly noticeable in his work depicting the people,

buildings, and animals of India, a place he visited many times. In these sketches, he depicts scenes and situations in detail, bringing to life the places he visited (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 67).

Yunoki's *The Joy of Travel* was published in 1986. It features an important series of works dedicated to his trips to various countries (fig.4). Later that year he displayed these works at Craft Space WA. Here we can see the first series of works related to a specific theme—travelling—in which Yunoki focuses his attention and creativity toward explorations of everyday life (fig.5). A turning point for Yunoki was his trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1986. He not only visited tourist spots such as houses and mud constructions built by indigenous people, but he also got to see Alexander Girard's collection at the International Folk Art Museum.

Of the collection, Yunoki found the Mexican toys the most impressive, as these objects were created with simple materials such as leaves, soil and wire. Yunoki's attention was also drawn to the way things were displayed at the museum; the smallest details were included, recreating the world of the creators (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 74-75).

This first encounter with dolls is what probably drove Yunoki to start his series of dolls using an embossing technique at Atelier MMG. Thus,



Figure 4. Samiro Yunoki, 1986 《立ち話 カイロ》 ("The Joy of Travel exhibition". Samiro.net).



Figure 5. Samiro Yunoki, 1986 《ポストと老人 ボンベイ》 ("The Joy of Travel exhibition". Samiro.net).



Figure 6. Samiro Yunoki Collection. Studio view (*Samiro Yunoki works at 92 years old* 2014, 89).



Figure 7. Samiro Yunoki Collection. Mexican toys (*Samiro Yunoki works at 92 years old*, 2014, 84).

Yunoki's imagination was not only nourished by travelling and sketching, but by collecting things (fig.6-7), such as toys and handmade crafts from various locales. Collecting became an important activity for him; we can see the impact it has on his creative pursuits by looking at his studio (Yunoki and Atsuta 2014, 72-115).

Another important inflection point in Yunoki's career was his encounter with printmaking. It was in 1983 that he started a deep relationship with Atelier MMG Tokyo, learning and acquiring a new way of expressing his ideas. This encounter not only enabled him to expand his creative language but also deepened his connection with Paris, where he produced work mainly in the 1990's at the printing workshop IDEM Paris. This printing studio opened under a different name,



Figure 8. Travels' sketches by Samiro Yunoki. (*Time with Yunoki Samiro* 2020, 233).

Mourlot, and was commissioned to print works for major artists such as Picasso, Matisse and Chagall during the 20th century (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 109-112).

As Masuda recounts, Yunoki's connection to Paris began as a boy longing for his father Hisata, who sent him a postcard while traveling in Paris before the First World War. He filled sketchbooks of his travels to Paris (fig.8) and he describes it as an important place for art and culture (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 102).

During his experience in printmaking, Yunoki did not confine himself to two-dimensional works, but also explored three-dimensional pieces. While in Paris, Yunoki explored seven printmaking techniques, including *gaufrage* (fig.9). In French, *gaufrage* means to use a stamp shape, or a mold. Thus, the notion of what can be categorized as printmaking is not limited to lithograph or monotype; creating solid paper shapes from a mold is also included in this genre (Masuda 2013, 89).

It's interesting to note that Yunoki's works were created with the *katazome* technique, in which repetitiveness is similar to printmaking. *Pochoir*, a technique similar to *katazome*, was used in France as a printing technique for book illustrations, but in France this technique is not included in the genre



Figure 9. Samiro Yunoki, 1997. 《明日の耕地》
gaufrage technique, 24 x 16.5cm.
(*Dreaming Hands* 2013, 22).



Figure 10. Yunoki in the printmaking studio.
(*Time with Yunoki Samiro* 2020, 45).

of craft but rather in the arts.

Yunoki was not only attracted to techniques focused on reproduction; he also created a great number of monotype works that are one-of-a-kind pieces. From 1983 to 1984, he produced work at Atelier MMG Tokyo (fig.10), but it was from 1996 to 1997 that he increased his production. It's possible that retiring from Joshibi University in 1991 allowed Yunoki to dedicate more time to his studio. He created work especially with the monotype technique, which consists of spreading ink on a surface and drawing directly on the inked surface, using the fingers or a cloth to extract part of the ink (Masuda 2013, 91-92).

His large production of work enabled him to be a part of the SAGA exhibition in Paris in 1998, which gathered printing work including posters from artists around the world. This exhibition not only placed Yunoki's work in a new genre separate from textiles, but also widened his knowledge of techniques. During the exhibition he encountered the *carborundum* technique through Michel Haas's artwork *Le Débat du Cœur et du Corps* (fig.11). For Yunoki, the most impressive aspect of this technique was the materiality of the ink that became a relief. He felt compelled to try it at Atelier MMG, which drove Yunoki to adjust the press and achieve successful results, similar to

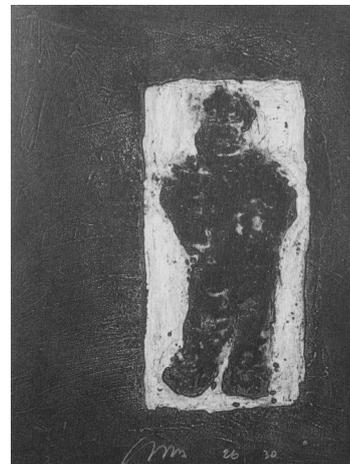


Figure 11. Michel Haas, 1997. "Le débat du cœur et du corps", carborundum technique, 38x28.5 cm.
(*Dreaming Hands* 2013, 90).

what he had observed from Michel Haas's work. In 2007, Yunoki created 60 works with this technique (Masuda 2013, 90-91)

According to Masuda, Yunoki continued printmaking at Atelier MMG for a period of 24 years, from 1983 to 2007. In collaboration with technicians at the atelier, he produced around 400 works. The vast production was diverse, with techniques ranging from monotype, mimeograph, lithography, carborundum, gaufrage, linocut and paper cutout (fig.12-14). It is in this work that Yunoki's connection toward the material (matter) and his hands—in the printmaking workshop it's common to be covered with substances—erases

the boundary between artist and artisan, and the process of creation stands beyond any attempt of categorization (Masuda 2013, 103).

4. Art and Design (2000 - 2021)

At this stage of his life, Yunoki looked back at his creative career which had already covered half a century. Although his roots were tied to the *katazome* dyeing technique, his exploration of different forms of expression led him to gradually break away from *Mingei* and create unique and original work, consistently using contrast, bright

colors, and focusing on both abstract and figurative motifs (Samuel 2014, 7).

Yunoki was not consciously trying to break away from *Mingei*, but the possibility of repeating himself in textile creation encouraged him to expand his technical and expressive knowledge. Around his 60th birthday, before travelling to India, he felt conflicted and even wondered if he should continue dyeing. He worried that he would continue creating work in the same way he had been, as if applying a formula that gave the same results, thus falling into self-imitation (Yunoki and Atsuta, 2021, 76).

For Yunoki, reflection on the creative process is as important as the work itself. He isn't simply trying to create decorative pieces to adorn the space in which they are displayed; his aim is to evoke a joyful and astonishing presence, similar to daily life experiences. Moreover, his originality lies in the different forms of expression he undertakes that range from textiles, sculpture, and illustrated books (Samuel 2014, 7).

Yunoki's glass paintings hold a special place in his repertoire. In 2001, he held an exhibition at Craft Space WA which consisted of a series of glass paintings within golden Mexican frames.



Figure 12. Samiro Yunoki, 1984. 《犬の肖像》, lithography technique, 26.5 x 21.5cm (Dreaming Hands 2013, 9)



Figure 13. Samiro Yunoki, 1996. 《踊る怪人》 monotype technique, 57x46cm (Dreaming Hands 2013, 15)

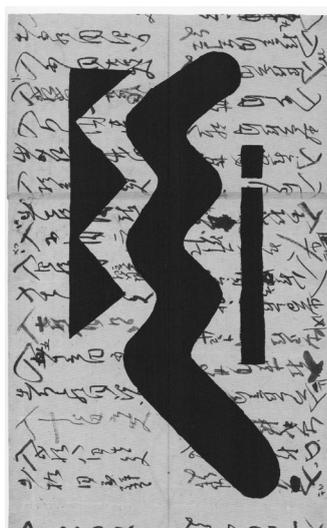


Figure 14. Samiro Yunoki, 2001. 《形象4》 2001, linocut, 43x30cm (Dreaming Hands 2013, 41)



Figure 15. Samiro Yunoki, 《小鳥》, Painting on glass (Samiro.net).

Yunoki removed the convex area of these frames, where there was a mirror, and painted on the reverse concave surface, which resulted in colorful, shiny, expressive representations of various themes, ranging from depictions of animals to daily situations (fig.15).

In 2003, Yunoki returned to Paris to take part in the International Print Exhibition (Salon International de l'Estampe), where he displayed monotype, linocut and lithograph artwork. He held exhibitions at Gallery MMG later that year and in January 2004, where he showed monotype, lithograph, mimeograph and paper cutout artwork (Masuda 2013, 97).

At the turn of the millennium, Yunoki focused his production on printmaking, paintings, and book illustrations. The latter became a constant part of Yunoki's creative pursuit since he received the International Book Award in 1996 at *La Fondation Espace Enfants* for his debut illustrated book *Magical Words* (魔法のことば), published by Craft Space WA in 1994 (fig.16). The illustrations for this book were created in katazome, and Maruyama describes them as a colorful and vivid representation of an ancient world where words were nonexistent (Maruyama 2020, 2).

For the illustrated book *Toko to Gugu to Kiki* (トコとグーグーとキキ) published in 2004 (fig.17-18), Yunoki created three-dimensional works that

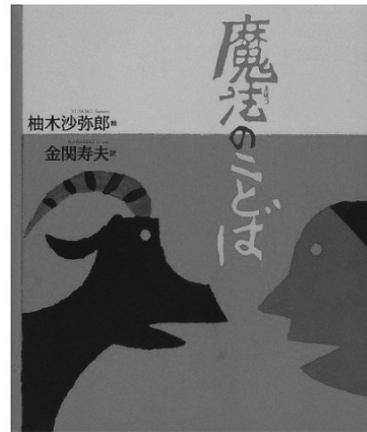


Figure 16. Samiro Yunoki, 1996. *Magical Words* front cover illustration. (Samiro.net).

conveyed this book's world and their characters. He challenged himself to create an installation with pieces that he created with various materials (fig.19), including papier-mâché, sheep wool and plant fibers (Maruyama 2020, 4).

In 2008, Yunoki received the Sankei Children's book award for *Sen Nen Man Nen* (せんねんまんねん), for which he had created images in translucent watercolors which accompanied a beautiful poem written by Michio Mado, a poet known for her nursery rhyme *Elephant* (ぞうさん). In 2016, Yunoki illustrated *Ame ni mo Makezu* (雨ニモマケズ), an ode to the spirit of Kenji Miyazawa, a prominent children's book writer. The aim of the book was to convey a prayer-like poem that not only expressed Kenji's spirit through bright colors, but, as Maruyama mentions, to offer a bright path in the dark for those who experienced the 2011 Great East Earthquake as well as people recently suffering due to the Coronavirus outbreak (Maruyama 2020, 5-7).

While producing illustrated work, Yunoki returned to dyeing and created a series of work which consisted of simple shapes and large-scale figures on fabric; the work contained almost no trace of pattern or repetition, with a few exceptions. In the year 2008 he held his first solo exhibition in Paris *Les Domaines Flotantes* at Galerie de l'Europe, where he showed mainly textile work; he returned in 2009 and 2010 to hold solo exhibitions at the same gallery (Masuda 2013, 98).



Figure 17. Illustrated book *Toko to Gugu to Kiki* katazome process by Samiro Yunoki (*Hana* 2020 summer, 4)



Figure 18. Dyed work and stencil for *Toko to Gugu to Kiki* by Samiro Yunoki (*Hana* 2020 summer, 4)



Figure 19. Samiro Yunoki's installation view, characters from *Toko to Gugu to Kiki* illustrated book. (*Hana* 2020 summer, 18).



Figure 20. Samiro Yunoki, "La Danse des Formes" exhibition, 2014. (Samiro.net).

In 2014, Yunoki returned to Paris for the exhibition *La Danse des Formes* at the Guimet Museum, where he displayed a significant amount of textile work (fig.20), which resulted in an important donation of Yunoki's pieces (Samuel 2014, 8).

In 2018, Yunoki came back to his Mingei roots and opened the exhibition *Dye works by Samiro Yunoki: Patterns and Colors* (柚木沙弥郎の染もようと色彩) at the Japan Folk Crafts Museum in Tokyo. This exhibition is an homage to Professor Yanagi's ideal of Mingei crafts. Although Yunoki was surprised that he was asked to hold this exhibition and hesitant to show his latest abstract

work, he concluded that he was creating his own answer to Professor Yanagi's proposal on Mingei. The following year he took this exhibition to the Folk Arts Museum in Toyota, Aichi (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 31-32).

At this stage, Yunoki was reflecting on his work in light of what he had accomplished, but he also kept challenging his creativity by gathering inspiration from important works produced by his predecessors. This was the main motivation for the *Choju-Giga* exhibition held at the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Modern Art in 2019 (fig. 21-22). *Choju-Giga* is a national treasure monochrome ink painting that depicts anthropomorphic animals painted by the Buddhist painter Toba Sojo (鳥羽僧正) in the 12th Century. For this work Yunoki wanted to create his own scroll, and at the age of 96 decided to produce a piece linked to this national treasure, with the

support of Ado Murayama's (村山亜土) 1957 *Butoh* drama based on this scroll. According to Yunoki, the end of the Heian period was marked by natural disasters and political struggles; he compares the hardships of that time with the current time, which he describes as chaotic (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 80-81).

Although 2020 was marked by the spread of the Coronavirus, it was an active year for Yunoki in terms of exhibition. He returned to Matsumoto City, where he attended high school, and held the exhibition *Samiro Yunoki : 97-year-old Dyer Here and Now* (柚木沙弥郎のいま) at the Matsumoto City Museum of Art. This exhibition gathered a large amount of Yunoki's work from his career, ranging from textiles, printmaking work, illustrations, and installations (Muto et al. 2020, 128-132).

Tokyo's Idee Gallery held the exhibition *Samiro Yunoki : Folk Artist* in 2020. Under the direction of industrial designer Naoto Fukasawa, the exhibition featured Yunoki's latest textile work, which was a reminder of the current times. Also in 2020, Yunoki's work was chosen to be featured at the sleekly designed Ace Hotel in Kyoto (fig. 23). The building design of the hotel was based on the concept "East meets West" by architect and designer Kengo Kuma, who also designed Tokyo's Japan National Stadium. The interior design was directed by the LA design group Commune, which requested that Yunoki display his textile and print works in the common areas and rooms of the hotel; Yunoki also created the lettering for the hotel logo and room numbers (fig. 24) (Maruyama 2021, 14-19).

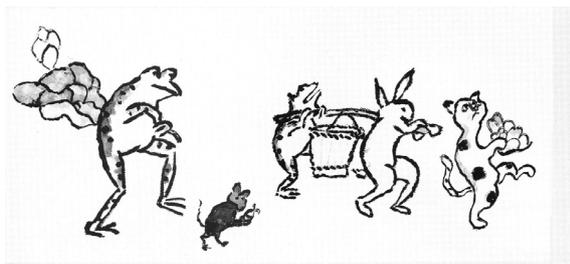


Figure 21. Samiro Yunoki, 2019. *Choju-Giga*, detail of the painting. (*Samiro Yunoki, 97 year old dyer*, 95).

In 2021, the 99-year-old Samiro Yunoki still has a strong motivation to live and continue creating. He cannot work at the same speed and intensity as he once did; naturally, his production rate has decreased. However, he believes that the less time he has, the more time he has to concentrate on what he wants to do. Drawing is an important part of his daily activities, and he continues to do it enthusiastically even when he is in a weak physical state. He continues to create with such passion because he considers that he has a mission to live for the seniors and his classmates who passed away during the war (Yunoki and Atsuta 2021, 69-71).

Conclusion

Samiro Yunoki's work reflects the series of life events that led him to become an individual artist beginning with his upbringing and his connections to the artistic world that continued to grow. Throughout the course of his career, he kept his curiosity fresh and continued to question his creative process, greatly prompted by his mentor Serizawa.

In the beginning of his career, he created work that can be categorized as crafts, following the path dictated by the Mingei movement and Soetsu Yanagi's rules of what belonged to the world of Mingei crafts. It was a period of following rules dictated by a medium in order to achieve high quality and technically-skilled textiles. This first stage of learning, which pushed Yunoki to focus on the *katazome* and *chusen* techniques, allowed him



Figure 22. Yunoki with his sketches for *Choju-Giga* (*Samiro Yunoki, 97 year old dyer*, 102).



Figure 23. Ace Hotel room view; Yunoki's work is displayed on the wall. (*Hana* 2021 summer, 14).

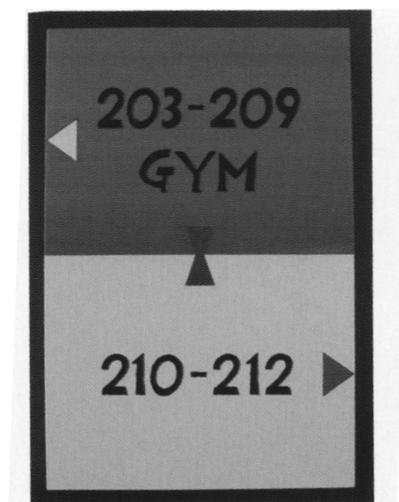


Figure 24. Sign design using Yunoki's lettering. (*Hana* 2021 summer, 19).

to explore possibilities with dyeing as a medium.

Yunoki's later entrance into printmaking and subsequent book illustration gave him other ways to explore his ideas. To some extent it also liberated him from the process of creating patterns, allowing him to reinvent himself with more direct expression, using drawing as an important part of the creation process. These explorations into other mediums not only led him to question the way he was producing textiles but also showed him other creative possibilities. He approached dyeing in a different way, as we can see in his later dye work (2000-2021). In this work, the idea of "pattern" is almost absent, and is replaced by large compositions depicting a subject matter on the textile piece; repetition is almost nonexistent in the work created during this period.

The diversity in Yunoki's work allows us to see a creator who was originally attracted to the *katazome* technique, which he eventually made his own by skillfully pursuing it. This led him to finding new ways of using this knowledge to his expressive advantage. He replied to the world by actively exploring other means of expression that kept him prolifically producing work. The question that arises after reflecting on Samiro Yunoki's career is, can we refer to his work as

avant-garde? Has he reached this category of art with all of his creations?

Certainly, some of his work falls into the category of "art," but his production as a whole has to be carefully addressed. This is because the historical context from which his work has been drawn greatly defines whether we are talking about arts or crafts, and the exhibition venue and ultimate purpose of his creations may affect this categorization. Undoubtedly, for an artist such as Samiro Yunoki, who travelled to many parts of the world, was influenced by Western artists, and has experienced a changing world where the boundaries of art and crafts seem to have blurred, it's important to look at the time period of his creations and grasp the artistic atmosphere of the time of production.

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- back to 1000 years. Some say it was probably developed during the Nara period, although its origin is still discussed. It's a traditional handicraft characterised by very detailed patterns, the production of which requires high skill, perseverance and patience. <https://isekatagami.or.jp> (accessed August 31, 2021).

¹ Ise Katagami is a special type of stencil that dates