

March 11, 2025

Keio University

Keio University Art Center to Host

Art Archive Exhibition XXVII

Correspondence-Poetry or Letters and Affects—Shuzo Takiguchi and Shusaku

Arakawa/Madeline Gins

(March 17–May 30, 2025)

The Keio University Art Center (KUAC) holds various collections in its archive. One of these is the Shūzō Takiguchi collection which comprises about 3,500 letters. While these letters show the relationships that existed between the writers as well as their thoughts and ongoing projects, they also show how individuals do not exist in a vacuum, capturing moments of mutual inspiration as people affected each other.

This exhibition explores through the exchange of letters between Shūzō Takiguchi, Shūsaku Arakawa/Madeline Gins. Furthermore, it seeks to show that archival materials are not merely records of the past but also have the potential to generate new “histories.”

1. Exhibition Details

Dates: March 17 (Monday) – May 30 (Friday), 2025

Closed on weekends, national holidays, and from Saturday, April 26 to Tuesday, May 6

*Special openings : Saturday, April 19 and Saturday, May 24

*Other scheduled closures: Monday, April 21 and Monday, May 26

Exhibition hours: 11:00–18:00

Venue: Keio University Art Center, 1F Art Space of South Annex, Mita Campus

Entrance fee: Free of charge

Hosted by: Keio University Art Center

Supported by: Reversible Destiny Foundation, Arakawa+Gins Tokyo Office, and the Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art and Design

Website: <http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/en/news-events/event-archive/artarchive27/>

(available in Japanese and English)

*For the latest information, please check the exhibition website linked above.

2. Exhibition Overview

“The simple act of folding pleats in a piece of paper. Mere pieces of letter stationery which might better be called *correspondence-poetry*...These are both *objects* and words. A book which will forever remain unbound. Nor can the pages be put in order.”

(Provisional English translation of excerpt from p. 116 of Shūzō Takiguchi’s “Hakushi no Shuhen,” *Marginaria* (1966), published by Misuzu Shobo. First seen on p. 69 of Shūzō Takiguchi’s “Hakushi no Shuhen,” in the 1963 March edition of *Mizue*, published by Bijutsu Shuppan-sha. In the original version, the Japanese was printed with the homophonic character for “poetry” rather than “paper” in the term that has been rendered “correspondences.”)

“The maker ‘dies’ or is ‘dismantled’ by the series of states that originate from it. To put this another way, the group known as ‘us,’ existing concurrently in time and space (often acting as an individual using the

term 'I'), will begin to come together again. This maker is ignorant of this 're-forming' in time and space, and so we are all taken to the blank. / In countless re-formings, there are countless blanks."

(Shūsaku Arakawa's "Production Notes," *The 6th Exhibition Homage to Shūzō Takiguchi*, Satani Gallery, 1986. While the original notes were written in English, the only reference material available was Kunio Motoe's Japanese translation which was used to reconstruct this excerpt.)

Shūzō Takiguchi (1903–1979) and Shūsaku Arakawa (1936–2010) affected each other in various ways. Soon after Arakawa left Japan for the United States, Takiguchi added the name "Madeline Gins" (1941–2014) to his list of people he communicated with, a correspondence that would continue until the end of his life. Takiguchi had created Handmade-brochure that seemed both complete and incomplete. He called them "correspondence-poetry/paper," and, if we take this literally, this brochure is a collection of letters.

When looking at the letters that Arakawa and Gins sent to Takiguchi, they are not mere updates on their work or recent events, but often approach a new medium altogether in their use of humor and wit, transcending the "letter" format. For example, Arakawa and Gins would layer their own words on top of old filled-in postcards, creating new meaning by their own additions, or adding arrows and numbers to images printed on the postcards in order to change the meanings and generate new perspectives of the letters. Due to the extremely personal nature of letter-writing, there are also many examples of esoteric or incomprehensible expressions that clearly held meanings that only the sender and receiver would understand. At the same time, this generates an open-ended and intimate "blank." This exhibition looks at letters (the "correspondence-poetry") as a place of inspiration and co-creation, giving an opportunity for visitors to ponder different topics related to Takiguchi, Arakawa, and Gins by readings between the "blanks."

*This exhibition is based on the shared theme of "letters" along with the exhibition at the Shūzō Takiguchi Collection Room in the Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art and Design (November 2024 to February 2025), and the symposium held at Keio, Papier Plié 02: Correspondences between Shūzō Takiguchi and Shūsaku Arakawa/Madeline Gins—Margin and Blank (December 2024).

At present, the Keio University Art Center is collaborating with the Arakawa+Gins Tokyo Office and the Reversible Destiny Foundation in order to organize the letters between Shūzō Takiguchi, Shūsaku Arakawa, and Madeline Gins. This exhibition was made possible by this collaboration.

3. Artist Bios

Shūzō Takiguchi (1903–1979)

Takiguchi began his work as a poet in the latter half of the 1920s, trailblazing the acceptance of surrealism in Japan. His prewar masterpiece *Modern Art* (1938) became a benchmark for artists in the aftermath of World War II. In addition to his work as an art critic and exhibition organizer, Takiguchi became known for his self-published books called "Handmade-brochures" that he began creating after 1960. He used his books to explore existence, objects, and subjects, never letting go of the motif which shaped his early work, "poetry is action" (*Poetry and Reality*, 1931). He is best remembered for *Marginalia* (1966), *Poetic Experiments by Shūzō Takiguchi 1927–1937* (1967), and *To and From Rose Sélavy* (1968). His home study was filled with the works and objects relating with his network of friendships, both in Japan and abroad.

Shūsaku Arakawa (1936–2010) and Madeline Gins (1941–2014)

Shūsaku Arakawa began his work as an artist in the latter half of the 1950s, then moved to the United States in 1961. He met poet Madeline Gins in 1962, and they began collaborating together in New York. They began a series of experimental artwork called diagram in the early 1960s, a project collectively known as the "Mechanism of Meaning." Later in his life, Arakawa began to shift his focus to look at issues related to art and body, working on many architectural pieces during and after the 1990s. Some of his most notable pieces include *Ubiquitous Site*, *Nagi's Ryoanji*,

Architectural Body (1994), *Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro Park* (1995), and *Reversible Destiny Lofts—Mitaka (In Memory of Helen Keller)* (2005).

4. Press Images and Works To Be Exhibited

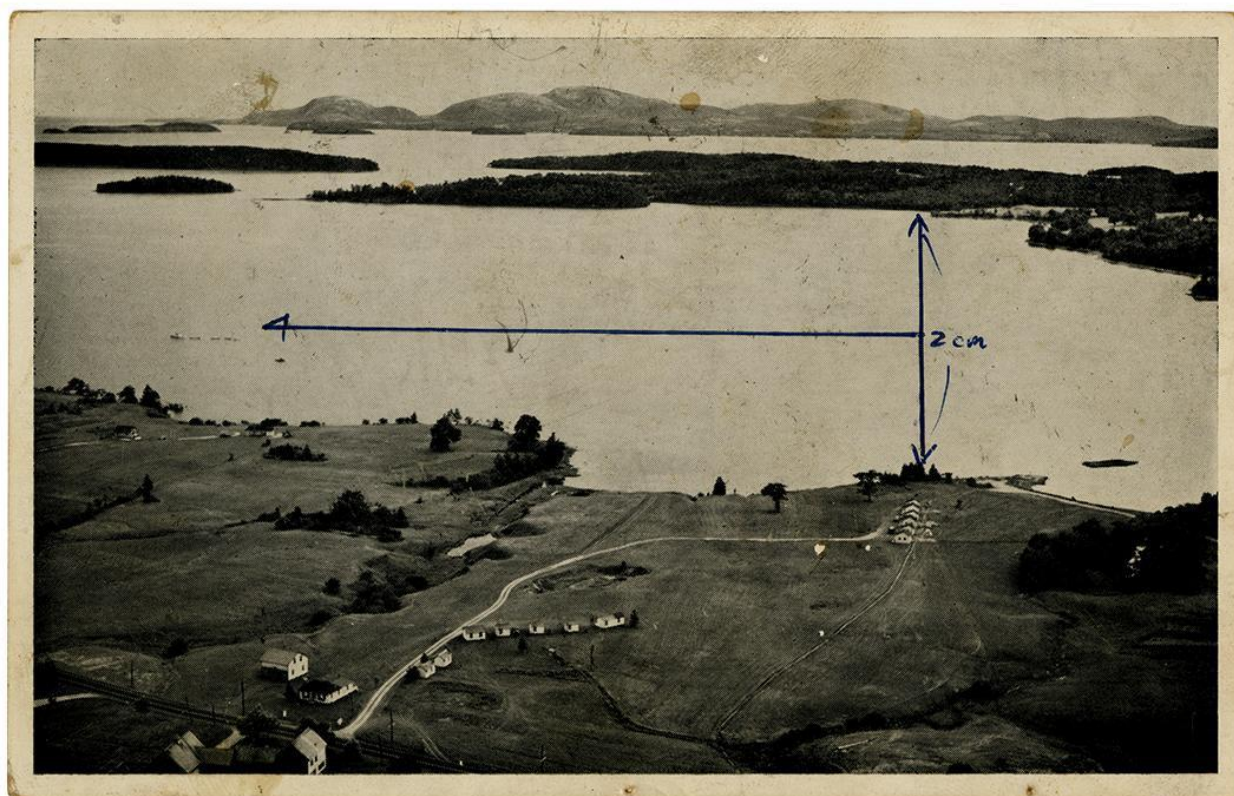
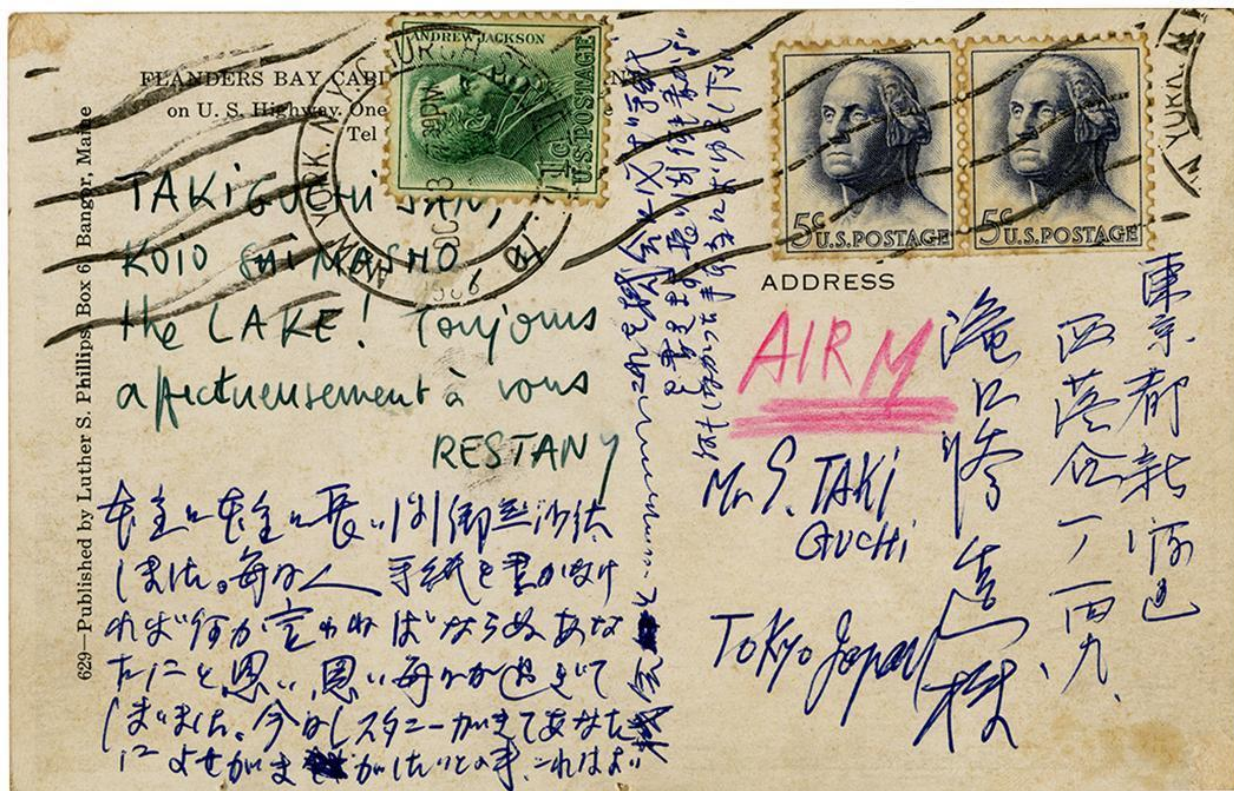
a. Main visual for the exhibition:

Photo of Shūzō Takiguchi, Shūsaku Arakawa, and Madeline Gins speaking while observing *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, at the Marcel Duchamp exhibition (1973, Philadelphia Museum of Art)

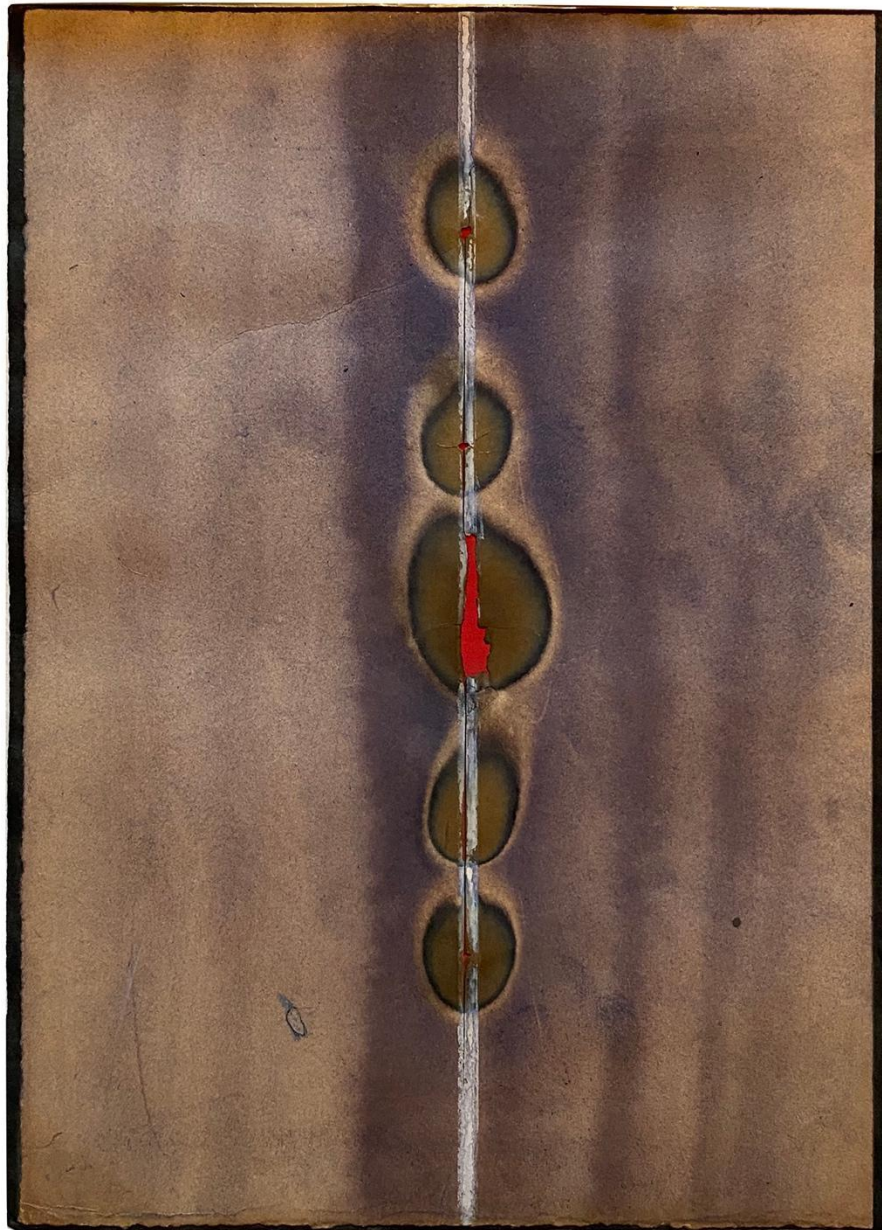
Provided by: Keio University Art Center (Photographed by Akira Moriguchi)



b. Letter dated December 3, 1963, from Shūsaku Arakawa to Shūzō Takiguchi
 Provided by: Keio University Art Center



c. “Burnt Drawing” sent by Shūzō Takiguchi to Shūsaku Arakawa in 1962
Provided by: Arakawa+Gins Tokyo Office



5. Related Events

Gallery talk:

Time and date: 14:00–15:10, Saturday, April 19, 2025

Commentators: Momoyo Homma, Takeyoshi Matsuda (Arakawa+Gins Tokyo Office), Hitoshi Kubo (event coordinator)

Live Commentary on the *Reversible Destiny Lofts—Mitaka (In Memory of Helen Keller)*

Venue: Keio University Art Center

Symposium

Time and date: 15:00–17:00, Saturday, May 24, 2025

Speakers: Kohei Kuwada, Fumi Tsukahara, Kei Hirakura, Momoyo Homma, Takeyoshi Matsuda, Hiroki Yamamoto (Inu no Senaka-za), Hitoshi Kubo
Venue: Will be announced on the exhibition website at a later date.

*Schedule is subject to change without notice.

*Updates will be posted on the website below as they become available.

<http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/news-events/event-archive/artarchive27/> (available Japanese and English)

6. Venue Access

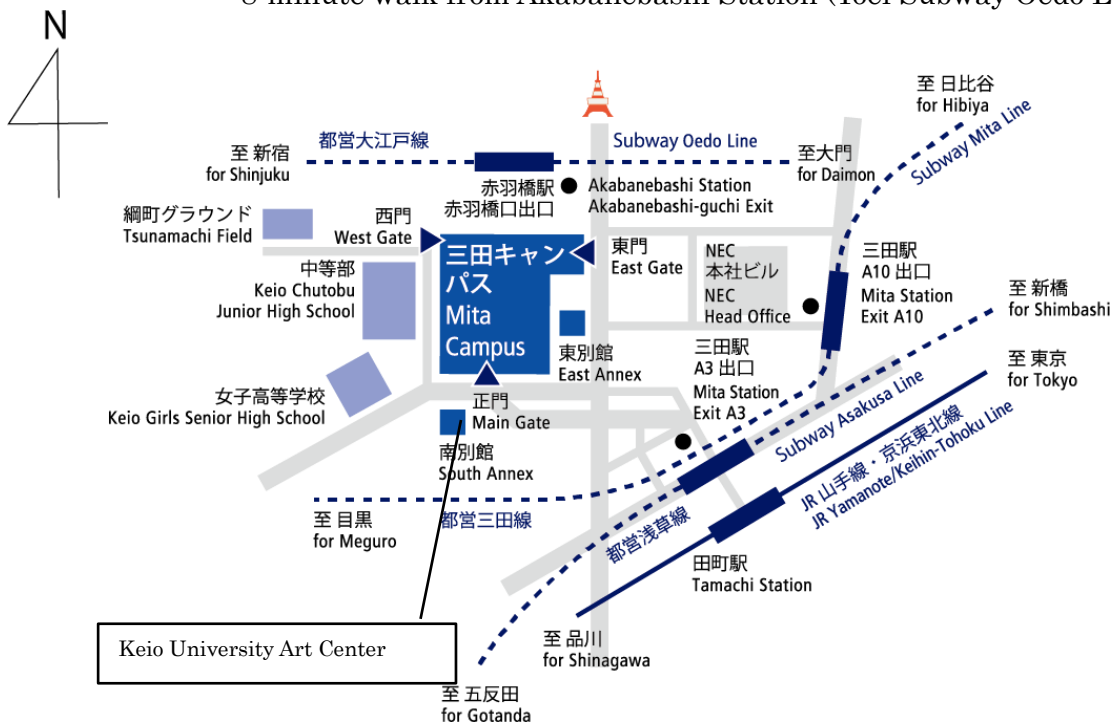
Venue: Keio University Art Center, 1F Art Space of South Annex, Mita Campus

Address: 2-15-45 Mita, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 108-8345

Access: 8-minute walk from Tamachi Station (JR Yamanote Line/JR Keihin-Tohoku Line)

7-minute walk from Mita Station (Toei Subway Asakusa Line/Mita Line)

8-minute walk from Akabanebashi Station (Toei Subway Oedo Line)



-----*Please direct any requests or inquiries to the contacts listed below in advance of any press coverage.-----

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