

January 15, 2026

Keio University

Keio University Art Center to Host Introduction to Art Archive XXVIII: In the Shadows: The Obscure World of Tatsumi Hijikata's Choreography (January 19–March 14, 2026)

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the passing of Butoh founder Hijikata Tatsumi, this exhibition is focused on the theme of “Butoh-fu,” Hijikata’s unique method of scoring or notating Butoh performances and showcases never-before-seen materials and footages. Through the notes of his disciples and video recordings of performances, this exhibition reflects on the passing down of Butoh to future generations. By presenting these materials alongside related programs such as performances and screenings, it provides a platform for introducing the concept of an “Movement Archive” in Japan and abroad.

1. Basic information

Dates: January 19 (Mon.)–March 14 (Sat.), 2026

Closed: Weekends and public holidays, February 2 (Mon.), March 9 (Mon.)

Special openings: January 31 (Sat.), March 14 (Sat.)

Exhibition hours: 11:00–18:00

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

Entrance fee: Free of charge

Hosted by: Keio University Art Center (KUAC)

Organizers: Keio University Art Center (KUAC), Portfolio Butoh

In cooperation with: Hijikata Tatsumi Asbestos Hall, Butoh Laboratory, Japan

Supported by: The Kao Foundation for Arts and Sciences

*This project was funded in part by a FY2025 Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C): “Movement Archive” - *International Research of Creative Use of Archival Materials* (25K03758)

Please refer to the exhibition website for the latest information.

<http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/en/news-events/event-archive/artarchive28/>

2. Exhibition Overview

Even though Hijikata Tatsumi’s career in Butoh lasted less than thirty years, it is nevertheless difficult to fully grasp the entirety of his work since *Forbidden Colors* in 1959. Within this complex legacy, it is clear that Hijikata made a conscious choice to push the boundaries of his Butoh performances after 1970. While the 1960s was one of the peaks of the Butoh Movement, Hijikata went his separate way from those who had also played key roles in this time, intent upon creating yet newer forms of Butoh. While Hijikata himself was taken aback when he left the stage in 1973, he went on to develop the “Butoh-fu” as a method of choreographing Butoh. This exhibition traces movements born of ghosts and shadows, drawing on new international perspectives and experimental approaches to moving images to present and reconsider Hijikata Tatsumi’s

method, grounded in his Butoh-fu. The exhibition will provide a half-century overview of Hijikata's creative activities since 1976 and will introduce three works in particular: Moe Yamamoto's *Costume In Front: A Model of Darkness for Boys and Girls*, Butoh Performance by Kobayashi Saga: *Bitter Light*, and Butoh Performance by Nimura Momoko: Celebrating the Establishment of Asbestos Hall's Matsushiro Branch *First Flower*.

3. Artist Bio

Hijikata Tatsumi (1928–1986)

Known today as the founder of *Ankoku Butoh* (Dance of Darkness), Hijikata Tatsumi was born in Akita Prefecture. After performing *Forbidden Colors* in 1959, he directed, choreographed, and performed in *Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Rebellion of the Body* in 1968. This stage was filled with violence, eroticism, and humor, sublimating even to sanctity. In 1972, he directed, choreographed, and performed in *Paragon of Sacrificing Great Dance, Performance to Commemorate the Second Unity of the School of Dance of Utter Darkness: Twenty-seven Nights for Four Seasons*. This body of work synthesized themes and content reflecting his return to Tohoku (Northern part of Japan) since Hosoe Eikoh's photo book *Kamaitachi* and was called "Tohoku Kabuki." These performances were attended by over 8,500 people, making it a monumental moment in Butoh history. Renowned internationally, Hijikata Tatsumi was a Butoh performer celebrated by many authors such as Mishima Yukio and Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, a subject of photographers including Hosoe Eikoh and Klein William, an actor on stages directed by Terayama Shūji, and a collaborator with leading artists across a wide variety of disciplines.

4. Press Images and Works to Be Exhibited

- a. Photograph of Butoh Performance by Kobayashi Saga: *Bitter Light*, photographer unknown, 1977, Keio University Art Center (KUAC)/Butoh Laboratory, Japan
- b. Poster for Butoh Performance by Kobayashi Saga: *Bitter Light*, ink on paper, 1977, Keio University Art Center (KUAC)/ Butoh Laboratory, Japan
- c. Poster for Butoh Performance by Nimura Momoko: Celebrating the Establishment of Asbestos Hall's Matsushiro Branch *First Flower*, ink on paper, 1978, Keio University Art Center (KUAC)/ Butoh Laboratory, Japan
- d. Butoh-fu *Script Sheet* in the handwriting of Hijikata Tatsumi, pencil on paper, date unknown, Keio University Art Center (KUAC)/ Butoh Laboratory, Japan

*Please be aware that the actual exhibited items may differ from those pictured here.

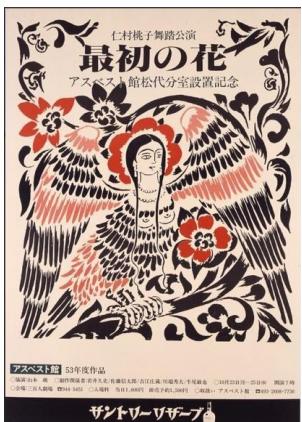
*Please give credit when using images.



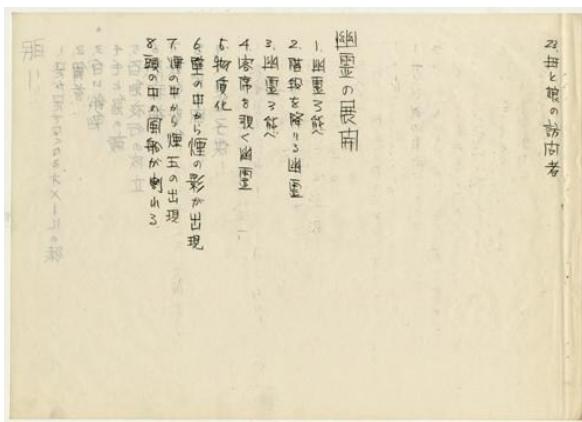
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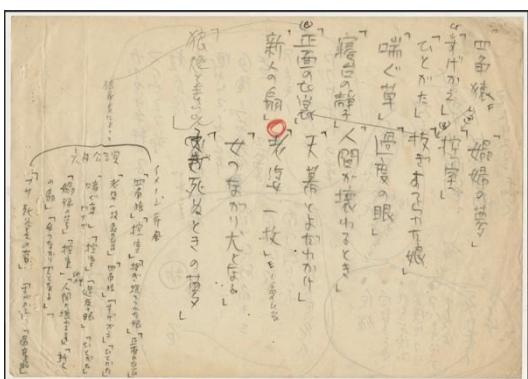
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5. Related Events

- The 40th Anniversary of Hijikata Tatsumi's Death: Talking together about Hijikata Tatsumi
Date and time: January 21 (Wed.), 2026, 18:00

Location: Global Research Lab (G-Lab), 6F East Research Building, Mita Campus, Keio University
Guest speaker: Saga Kobayashi Free admission. Visitors are welcome to enter and leave the venue at any time.

There will be a live broadcast of the event (via Zoom).

* Please refer to the website for more details.

<http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/en/news-events/event-archive/htanniv-40-1/>

■ Screenings of Hijikata Tatsumi's Choreography from the Late 1970s Part II

First event: Screening of Butoh Performance by Nimura Momoko: Celebrating the Establishment of Asbestos Hall's Matsushiro Branch *First Flower*

Date and time: March 12 (Thurs.), 2026, 18:00–20:00

Location: Global Research Lab (G-Lab), 6F East Research Building, Mita Campus, Keio University
18:00–20:00 Screening of Butoh Performance by Nimura Momoko: Celebrating the Establishment of Asbestos Hall's Matsushiro Branch *First Flower*

Performers: Momoko Nimura, Moe Yamamoto

Second event: Screening of Butoh Performance by Kobayashi Saga: *Bitter Light* and research presentation on “Butoh Scores”

Date and time: March 14 (Sat.), 2026, 16:30–19:00

Location: Global Research Lab (G-Lab), 6F East Research Building, Mita Campus, Keio University
16:30–18:10 Screening of Butoh Performance by Kobayashi Saga: *Bitter Light* (1977, 1 hr. 40 min.)

Performers: Saga Kobayashi, Yukio Waguri, et al.

18:15–19:00 Introduction to Butoh Scores

Dr. Rosa van Hensbergen (KUAC Visiting Committee Members, Yale University)

*The performance screenings will not be streamed online.

*The schedule is subject to change without notice.

*More details will be released on the website as they become available.

<http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/en/news-events/event-archive/artarchive28/>

6. Venue Access

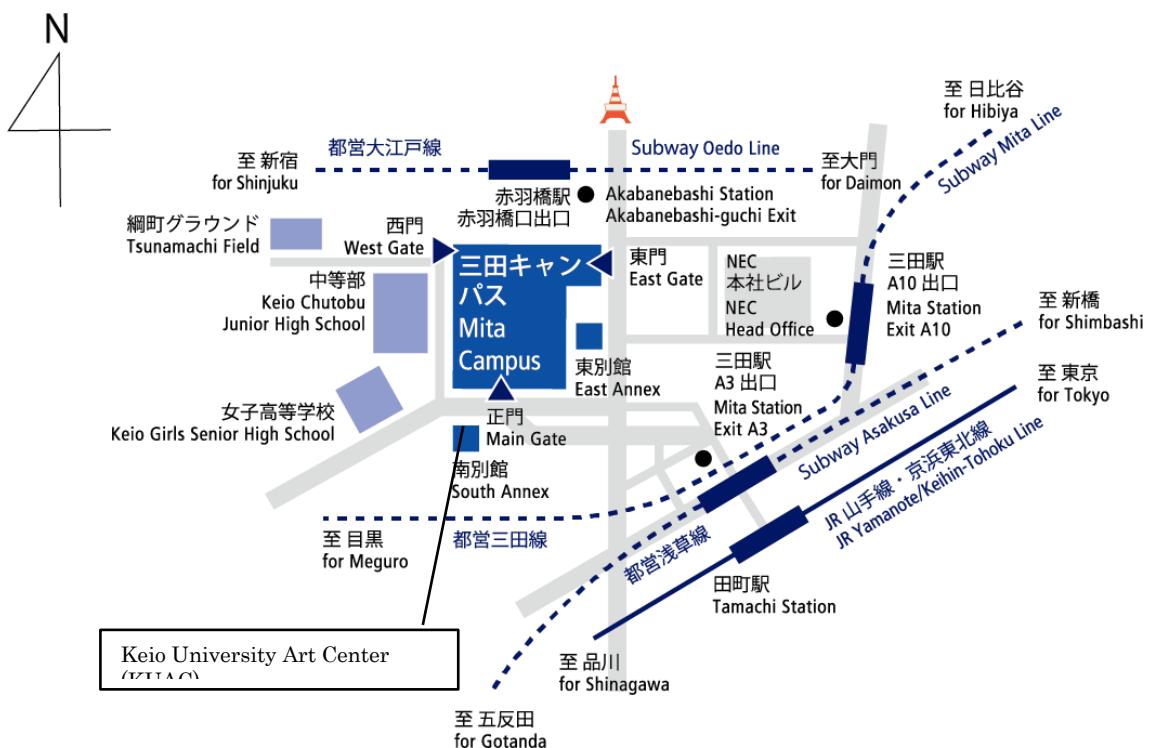
Venue: Keio University Art Center 1F Art Space of South Annex, Mita Campus

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.

*We have sent this news release to the MEXT Press Club and the cultural news departments of other media outlets.

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