'The logic of spectacle circa 1970'

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At about 5.20 in the afternoon of 26 April 1970, 25-year-old Satō Hideo climbed into the right eye of the golden face of the Tower of the Sun and shut the door behind him. He masked his face with a towel, put on a red helmet emblazoned with the characters for 'Red Army', and 'started agitating' (fig. 1). Satō had been involved in the anti-war movement for some time and had participated in an occupation of Hiroshima University the previous year. Now he encouraged his audience to 'crush the Expo'. A crowd of two to three thousand soon gathered and 170 police were dispatched to control the situation.[1]

The Tower was the main element in the 'theme exhibit' of the Osaka Expo, intended by the authorities as the embodiment of the theme, 'Progress and Harmony for Mankind', and 'produced' by 59-year-old artist Okamoto Tarō as an attempt to shock his audience out of the anomie that he saw as characterizing contemporary experience. The Tower itself took the form of a tapering white column with outstretched arms, adorned by two faces, white and black, front and back, at its midpoint, and surmounted by a concave golden face in which Satō was now installed. Inside the Tower, Okamoto had designed an immersive experience, taking the visitor from a subterranean depiction of the origins of life to a world of the future suspended in midair.[2]

To announce his intention, of disrupting the smooth, soulless routine of the everyday, Okamoto had designed the Tower deliberately to poke its head through the floating roof of the Festival Plaza, the main concourse of the Expo (fig. 2). The plaza had been designed by 39-year-old Isozaki Arata, one of a number of young architects working under the direction of 67-year-old Tange Kenzō, who was responsible for the master plan for the Expo. The site sprawled over some 330 hectares, or over 800 acres. It was bisected by an expressway, with administration facilities and an amusement park consigned to the smaller southern half and a kaleidoscope of national, NGO, and corporate pavilions radiated from the Plaza to occupy the main, northern part of the site, which was capped by an extensive Japanese garden (fig. 3).[3]

Both Satō and Okamoto sought to turn the Expo to transformative ends. They wanted to capture the attention of the visitor, to convince him or her of the need for and truth of an alternative way of seeing and being in the world, and thereby to effect a change in the relationship between the individual and their time. In doing so, they illustrate one possible and frequent understanding of spectacle and its uses: the monopolization of a space of representation so as to effect the work of ideology or its critique. Much of our work on the spaces and institutions of visual culture adopts this view. We linger on what is displayed. We read its message. And we assume that it is motivated: that the producer wants the visitor to go away thinking something in particular, that the objects on display are effectively subordinated to this end, and that the visitors get the point. Nor are we entirely wrong. There are few occasions where anything goes: the minimal demand of coherence requires some parameters, not least of ideology, within which site and event can be coordinated. Thus in Osaka, the rubric was progress, albeit interpreted variously and even challenged explicitly (not least by Satō).

In what follows, however, I want to argue that the significance of spectacle as communication can only be understood in the context of spectacle as system. Expos have to accommodate multiple interests and investments, numerous exhibitors, exhibits, and visitors. What is striking about them is the diversity of intention that can be accommodated within their parameters, the cacophony of the display itself, and the variety of the response. In order to do so, the work of Isozaki and Tange suggests, expos need not to provide a particular account of the world, but to account for contingency, for whatever might be put or happen in the space in question. Osaka was the most visited and therefore most successful expo in history not least because it could afford to be somewhat indifferent to what was put on display.

A century of exposition

The publicity for the Osaka Expo described it as the culmination of a century-long dream.[4] By 1970, Japan indeed had over a hundred years of experience of expos, but the claim was somewhat disingenuous. The archipelago first appeared at international exhibitions in the 1860s, in the midst of a tumultuous decade. The Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867, its second outing, was succeeded the following year with the collapse of Tokugawa military government and the installation of a new administration, operating in the name of the Meiji emperor and dedicated to the creation of a centralized state with which to pursue industry and empire. The new government seized on expos as a central plank in its policy of industrial promotion, for their didactic and therefore economic potential. They promised a controlled environment and captive audiences, within and to which bureaucrats could provide particular accounts of the world (at home) and of Japan (abroad). The revelation of their backwardness when compared to both foreign models and domestic competitors would encourage Japanese producers to new efforts. Overseas, foreign audiences would be captivated by the excellence of Japanese agriculture and industry (initially in the form of raw silk and what we now know as export art), thus creating demand and providing capital, with which to spur Japanese industry to new heights.

The policy worked, in part. Foreign audiences were wowed, creating the waves of enthusiasm we know as Japonisme and cementing a cultural complex we still see as quintessentially Japanese: ceramics and equally decorative arts; wooden architecture set in manicured if restrained gardens; traditional costume, femininity, tea. And domestic producers did respond. Indeed, the government was able to get out of the exhibition business soon after the turn of the century, at least at home. Agricultural and industrial associations held their own exhibitions, fostering professional development, while local governments began to use such events as celebrations of and justifications for municipal improvement and pride, both diminishing the need for the state to coordinate the initiative. In time, demand was such that the planning of exhibitions itself became a professional pursuit, creating the germ for what is still today a burgeoning industry. Abroad too, the rationale for participation remained. Given the usefulness of expos as cultural diplomacy and media events, it is not surprising that Japan continued to be assiduous in its participation and preparations for such opportunities to prove why a small Asian power might belong in a world of white industry and empire. But there was no compelling reason to hold such an event within Japan. There were attempts to stage an international exhibition in Tokyo in 1890, 1912, and again 1940, but these repeatedly foundered, as more pressing concerns, most often military, demanded that the necessary funds be directed elsewhere.

The Osaka Expo emerged instead from the new constellation of circumstances and imperatives that marked the postwar.[5] Following the catastrophe of defeat, expos again became a medium for domestic reconstruction on the part of local governments and cultural diplomacy by the state. Brussels in 1958 and Seattle, New York, and Montreal during the 1960s saw a sustained attempt by the government to gain acceptance by the 'international community' that was the contemporary code for the capitalist West. By the middle of the 1960s, the diplomatic rationale was supplemented by domestic considerations, which suggested the usefulness, finally, of holding such an expo in Japan. Reconstruction had been succeeded by rapid economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s, but growth brought consequences. It would take time before the government acknowledged the need to balance its attention to production with an awareness of distribution, its focus on the economy with some protection for the environment. But already in the early 1960s, bureaucrats and politicians saw a need for planning. The existing infrastructure was proving inadequate for the needs of an economy more than doubling its output every decade; the cutting-edge of the economy was beginning to shift from heavy industry to electronics and information technology, requiring an upgraded transport and communication structure; and the concentration of economic activity in the Tokyo metropolitan area threatened to clog up the arteries of the economy, leaving peripheries behind.

Planning was possible, but it was 'big events' that promised to realize the bureaucratic vision.[6] If the world were to come to Japan, the government would be justified in investing the money necessary to put on the necessary show and provide the infrastructure through which the economy might be managed. The first of these was the Olympics in 1964, which provided the freeways with which the capital could again begin to move, but also the bullet train which linked it to the Kansai region and the second cities of Kyoto and Osaka. Already before the opening ceremony, plans were afoot for a second installment, wherein an expo in the Kansai region itself would upgrade infrastructure, rebalance economic activity between the capital and the regions, and encourage people to use the trains. After some inevitable jousting within the region, the Senri hills, in northern Osaka, emerged as the chosen site for the expo, the hub for new rail and road networks, and an opportunity for suburban development.

Protest: happening

Postwar economic growth, however, had not been accompanied by smooth political sailing. 1970 came at the end of an eventful decade. It had started with massive protests in 1960 at the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty, coinciding with and in part powered by the emergence of an autonomous and radicalized student movement.[7] It was in the wake of these that Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato implored the nation to devote itself instead to economic matters, promising that if it did so income would double over the decade. It was a safe bet, given the magic of past performance and compound interest, and the next few years indeed saw an absence of overt political conflict and a fragmenting of the opposition coalition. 1967 and 1968, however, saw a new wave of student activism across a broad front, motivated on the streets by outrage at Japan's geopolitical subordination to the US, manifest in both the ongoing American occupation of Okinawa and Japanese involvement in the Vietnam War, but also on campuses at the conservatism and corruption of their own university administrations. Unlike their predecessors, moreover, these protestors were prepared to resort to violence. The most spectacular incident came with a 30-hour battle between 8,000 riot police and the few hundred student diehards occupying the Yasuda

Amphitheatre at the centre of the Tokyo University campus.[8] The end of the occupation did not mean the end of activity, however.[9] The security treaty was up for renewal again in 1970. And soon enough a movement mobilized against the Expo itself, seen as state propaganda and an attempt to provide distraction in what otherwise threatened to be a tumultuous year.

Given this background, the authorities were nervous as 1970 dawned.[10] Nor were fears assuaged, two weeks after the opening of the Expo, when the Japanese Red Army inaugurated their activities by hijacking an airliner at Tokyo International Airport, forcing the crew to fly them first to South Korea, where they released the passengers, and then North Korea, where they abandoned the plane.[11] The appearance of Satō in mid-air, less than one month after this incident, wearing a helmet that branded him as a member of this group, must have prompted concerns such that the dispatch of 170 police can only have been seen as a proportionate response. The incident soon became something more manageable, however.[12]

Satō-kun had chosen his perch well. The passageway leading to the eye was narrow and access was difficult. The police and the Expo Association quickly decided to resort to persuasion rather than frontal assault. By seven in the evening, a banner had been laid out on the ground, urging Satō to come down. At nine, two employees of the Expo Association appeared at a window, reiterating their concern and offering a blanket and some food. But it was too early for compromise. The two sides settled in, Satō waiting for the authorities to close the expo, and the authorities for him to tire. They also decided not to switch on the 50-kilowatt floodlight in front of which he was sitting. Usually, this illuminated the night skies, but now it threatened to burn their squatter to death.[13] An unanticipated protest may have been manageable. A murdered protestor was clearly not.

The following morning brought audience participation and media frenzy. A group of elementary school children, waiting in line, shouted encouragement. ‘Do your best, Red Army! Stick to it!’ ‘I’ll do my best.’ He waved, and they waved back. The producer also got in on the act. Around noon, a gentleman in a dark suit appeared among the crowd of reporters on the ground. At two, Satō listened to his radio as Okamoto’s comments were reported on the national news. ‘I think it’s wonderful. It’s a festival, so this is fine. … He seems to be shouting crush the Expo, but this kind of happening only pleases the visitors, doesn’t it?’ For Okamoto, Satō was part of the show, but Satō had other ideas.

> If I come down alive, it may only be a happening, but if this ends in my death … [i]t will become clear how a human sensibility is lacking in the commotion of the festival. … This Expo, which preaches progress and harmony, is really just a self-promoting show of state power. And Okamoto has served to disguise its true nature and hide its money-making.

On the evening news, the day’s events were rehearsed. ‘The man faces the people and waves, as if he were a hero.’ ‘That’s the mass media for you,’ commented Satō.

By late April, the Expo had been open for six weeks, and the newspapers had already documented the four years of preparation, opening ceremonies, initial reactions, teething problems, and critical reviews. Saturation coverage was the order of the day: this was, after all, the first international exhibition ever to be held in Asia, a consummation devoutly wished for over the course of a century, more or less. But there were four months left to fill, and the newsworthy was already in short supply: staged events, statistical titbits, and unanticipated contingencies were thin gruel, given the scale of operation and expectation. In the wake of inadequate refrigeration and food poisoning,[14] the 'guy in the eye' was, initially at least, a tailor-made media event.[15]

The second full day brought more of the same, with crowd reactions and news bulletins, but by the third morning the situation had normalized. Satō showed no signs of tiring, but media and visitors had begun to look elsewhere. Negotiations began. The authorities promised to reward capitulation with a deal, but Satō wanted some food before he would descend and a meeting with the press once on the ground. Neither was prepared to back down. The standoff continued on day four, but by May Day Satō was beginning to suffer and the riot police to advance. They took their time, however, and it was day six that saw the balance of power begin to shift. A policeman emerged from the hatch, secured by red climbing ropes, blinded by the prospect of fame. 'Even if you do stupid things in your organization, you get promoted.' He backed down, but Satō began to question his motivation. 'If the Expo's an illusion, then so is anti-Expo'. Satō realized that he didn't want to die. He was showing off, not even to the visitors, but to the riot police. At seven in the evening, he agreed to descend the following day. At nine, some students appeared beneath the tower and sang the Internationale. Satō felt a bit guilty.

The next morning, Satō surrendered his perch, just as the question of his endurance made him the object of renewed attention in the press.[16] At the round window, his belongings were inspected. They included both the Manyōshu, a collection of ancient Japanese poetry, and Hagakure, an 18th-century codification of prescriptions for samurai. Satō and his escort descended in the elevator and were met by five or six police dignitaries, weighed down with gold braid. There was no interview. At the local police station, the interrogation began. 'Why come down after seven days? Why not ten?' 'Aren't you Korean?' 'Why didn't you die? If you had died, it would have caused a bit of a stir.' Despite the helmet, there seemed to be no direct connection with the Red Army. Thus the curtain came down on what the *Asahi* newspaper finally characterized as an 'eye-jacking drama'.[17] In November, with his client still in custody, Satō's lawyer arranged for his own account of the event to be published in one of the leading monthly magazines.[18] Otherwise his efforts were subsumed as one incident among many in the flood of reports and retrospectives, which concluded the summer.[19] Perhaps most telling, the Osaka Prefectural Police, in their own commemorative volume, noted the protest as part of the official report, but also gave it pride of place with a full page spread in the photographic record of what the editors chose to classify as 'happenings' (fig. 4).[20]

To leave Satō here is not to insist that his protest be understood as nothing more than an incident in a police jotter. What is striking, though, after the nervous confrontations at the top of the tower, was the ease with which his actions were accommodated by the Expo, indeed became part of the show. The police were not indifferent to Satō, whose occupation prompted them to action. Their concern, however, was not so much with his message. Preparations for the Expo had been dogged by repeated protests along identical lines. Rather, Satō's achievement lay in being where he shouldn't, occupying an inappropriate space and disturbing the daily routine of the Expo site. It was his seizing of the spectacular potential of the Tower that prompted a well-rehearsed police operation. In the end, however, the operation succeeded: the police were able to account for Satō's actions, which could then become part of the official account of the Expo itself.

Art: brand

What did Okamoto Tarō mean by endorsing Satō's occupation of his Tower of the Sun? By 1970, the former should have emerged as the avuncular chair, if not yet the grand old man, of the Japanese avant-garde. At the end of the 1920s, he had followed a well-trodden path to Paris, where Picasso and others had inspired him to pursue abstraction. At the same time, he was studying anthropology with Marcel Mauss, prompting an interest in magical and religious symbolism. By the second half of the decade, Okamoto was associating with the surrealist group, not least Georges Bataille, who became an enduring influence, and he exhibited in the Exposition Internationale du Surrealisme in 1938. Returning to Japan in 1940, he won a prize for his European work from the Nika-kai, a leading avant-garde artist association, and following military service in the war he quickly became a prominent figure in the postwar avant-garde, representing Japan at the 1954 Venice Biennale.[21]

From the late 1940s, Okamoto began to inveigh against the 'heavy shell of the past' that imprisoned Japanese art and people.[22] This shell rendered tradition a remote, elite and 'antiquated reality', thereby denying people the resources they needed with which to confront the concerns of the present.[23] One way out was a principle he designated as 'bipolar oppositionalism'. The artist's responsibility was to represent 'all possible methodological dichotomies such as rationality / irrationality, figuration / abstraction, realism / surrealism, and reality / fantasy, as they are--torn--instead of unifying them'.[24] At the same time, Okamoto was also beginning to apply his ethnological training in research and writing on the pre-historic Jōmon period and in Okinawa, the southernmost islands of the archipelago, then under American administration. Here he found models for practice, notably in the 'dynamic and popular' styles that characterized Jōmon earthenware, in contrast to the refinement of the later 'static and aristocratic' forms that came to define the islands.[25] Returning to such sources, he believed, one could discover a way to hold such opposites in creative tension, thereby overcoming both the ossification of traditional Japanese art and the fragmentation of modern experience. Jōmon figurines and Okinawan masks quickly became recurrent motifs in Okamoto's own painting and sculpture, the 'black holes' of the eyes punctuating the surface of the face and leading the observer beyond the mask, not least in the three faces of the Tower of the Sun in the Expo of 1970.[26]

For many, given his avant-garde credentials, it was a shock that Okamoto agreed to participate in what came under heavy attack from artist as well as student groups in the run-up to the Expo, some comparing the event to wartime propaganda painting.[27] Okamoto justified his official role as producer, perhaps not least to himself, as the continuation of his earlier radicalism, underlining this by the repeated use of two key terms. The Expo itself he saw as a 'festival', not the 'strangely sober', sacred practice that characterized what went under the name in contemporary Japan, but rather an opportunity for 'massive consumption', getting drunk and going broke. Like a potlatch, the Expo promised a place where the surplus that had been produced through postwar economic growth could be consumed, where old ideas could be discarded and new worlds emerge. The Olympics had reduced the masses to spectators, the Expo promised participation. In order to realize this, Okamoto's role was to produce something 'monstrous', which would shock visitors out of the complacency and anomie of everyday life, coming into contact with their core humanity and each other. For Okamoto, then, he could stand against the progress and harmony that was the official theme by fracturing the smooth facade that they imposed on existence and revealing a more authentic life within.[28]

To do so, he created an immersive experience, beginning underground, before moving through the tower itself, to a midair exhibit, and finally returning to ground level: following the tour took the visitor from the origins of the world to ascend a tree of life, which culminated in the contemporary progress that would lead to the future, before coming back to the harmony that characterized the present.[29] Descending underground, one was plunged into darkness, from which emerged hugely magnified models of DNA and other basic building blocks of life. The 'world of life' was succeeded by the 'world of humans', first seen in early human communities, engaged in a struggle with nature. Human activity then evolved into spaces of 'wisdom' (chie), represented by a 'forest of tools'; 'prayer' (inori), by numerous masks hanging from the ceiling and by yet another, 'subterranean sun', designed by Okamoto; and finally 'encounter' (deai), by various human figures and forms.

Leaving the past behind, one entered the Tower of the Sun itself, within which a 'Tree of Life' soared skywards (fig. 5). Stairs and escalators took one past simple marine forms, then dinosaurs, to mammals and finally humans. Emerging from darkness into midair light, the roof held visions of the future: satellites illustrated the possibilities of 'space', diagrams of the brain the potential of 'humanity'; the 'world' was depicted with photo-collages of both dangers (Hiroshima, environmental pollution) and possibilities (ethnic diversity suggesting the possibility of mutual understanding); finally, architect-designed capsules provided glimpses of a variety of urban 'lifestyles' (many housing young women as model residents). Descending from the sky, an escalator led one through a second, low-lying Tower of the Mother, balanced on the other side of the Plaza a Tower of the Child, which was a simple pole along which were strung the abstract forms of a fish, ghost, human, and aircraft. In the middle of the plaza, linking the three towers unfurled 619 photographs, illustrating the 'nameless people who support the world' and thereby the harmony within diversity of the present.

To what extent did this 'monstrosity' produce the 'festival' that Okamoto wanted? Recently, both Expo and Okamoto have begun to be revisited and reevaluated, in terms that the latter would have endorsed. Satō himself in a recent interview also recognizes Okamoto's anarchist credentials and the significance of his call for everyone to 'liberate themselves' on the Festival Plaza.[30] Meanwhile, the dawn of the new millenium and the thirtieth anniversary of the Expo provided the opportunity for a major exhibition exploring 'The Message from Tower of the Sun,' jointly organized by the National Museum of Art in Osaka, which inhabits the transplanted Expo Museum of Fine Arts building, the Okamoto Tarō Museum of Art in Kawasaki, and the Expo Commemorative Association, together with appropriate media partners.[31] The exhibition encouraged the leading monthly arts magazine to devote a feature to Okamoto and Expo, including the former's ruminations on the Jōmon and an evocative on-site exploration of the now empty Tower of the Sun by Sawaragi Noi, a leading contemporary art critic.[32] Finally, Sawaragi's identification with Okamoto has resulted in an extensive, recuperative monograph, in which he seeks to refurbish Okamoto's message for a society that has forgotten him.[33]

It is worth pausing, though, before allowing Okamoto and his advocates the last word on the significance of his work. Nowadays, the Tower stands empty and alone in the midst of the Expo Commemorative Park. In 1970, however, it was surrounded by a crowd of pavilions, one of many trying to capture the distracted gaze of an exhausted visitor. In these circumstances, it is hard to imagine the theme exhibit being seen as a radical disjuncture, or providing the participatory, transformative experience that Okamoto desired. The exhibition itself, however abrupt the transition to subterranean darkness, thereafter reaffirmed the normative assumptions of evolutionary progress, culminating in an expansive, imagined future, albeit one hedged with the necessary warnings of apocalypse. The experience may have been immersive, but also quite typical, confronting a somnambulatory visitor with immobile exhibits, perhaps paling in comparison to the cinematic immersions that were commonplace in the corporate pavilions. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of those for whom the Expo still provides a talismanic memory of childhood were captivated elsewhere on site, intrigued by the Tower itself, but left cold by the core exhibit.[34] At the time, it was a rock from the moon, displayed in the US pavilion, which attracted the longest queues.[35] The Tower was unavoidable, certainly striking, even monstrous, but over time, like Okamoto himself it became a figure of fond recollection, even fun. By 1981, Okamoto's radicalism had culminated in a catchphrase, 'Art is explosion', immortalized in a television commercial. Similarly, the Tower today functions as a familiar sight in the Kansai landscape, giving bus guides an opportunity to fill their commentary, reminding a middle-aged audience of its youth, captive schoolchildren of a past before they were born, before speeding on to the more significant sites of Kyoto to the East or Himeji castle to the West.

Architecture: system

The Expo produced a number of icons, but the Expo itself was the product of a complex bureaucracy, in the form of the Japan Association for the 1970 World Exposition.[36] This was in large part the creation of the government, but operated autonomously and brought together individuals from a wide range of public and private organizations. Throughout the planning of the Expo, the Association's main role was one of coordination, raising funds and refereeing disputes between competing interests, visions, and projects. This did not render it immune from official interference: some exhibits were censored, most notoriously a collection of Hiroshima photographs, deemed 'too graphic'.[37] Nor did the Association garner a reputation for Solomonic judgment: a number of participants complained of bureaucratic inertia, dimwittedness and meddling.[38] In order to mount the Expo, however, the government and Association were compelled to subcontract responsibility for the content of the Expo to a huge range of committees, professionals, and intellectuals. It was the latter who came up with the theme that the Expo was supposed to represent, the symbols through which it would be identified, and most importantly the site within which the pavilions, exhibits and visitors would be accommodated. Similarly, companies and corporations availed themselves of the professional services of architects and designers to give form and content to their own presence on site.[39]

Architects had long been involved in the planning and design of expos. By the middle of the twentieth century, however, a number of developments had combined to foreground their importance. International exhibitions had begun in the mid-nineteenth century as a comprehensive account of art and industry, with nation-states as the category through which one might compare the world under one roof. Already by the end of the century, however, expos had become a capacious site for multiple pavilions and popular distractions, with nation-states gradually ceding ground to corporations and entertainment.[40] While these disaggregated sites still used classical models to legitimate their claims of universal significance, from the 1920s and 1930s authorities began to turn to modernist forms to declare their authority on the fast-moving present and so the uncertain future.[41] Similarly, while non-Western countries, not least Japan, had earlier been provided with, or asked for, replicas of indigenous architecture within which to stage their cultural distinction, by mid-century they too had begun to ask architects to demonstrate the contemporaneity of their cultural credentials. Paris in 1937 thus saw a modernist Japanese pavilion by Sakakura Junzō, even if New York in 1939 saw a reversion to a more traditionalist form.[42] By Brussels in 1958, the pavilions had become as significant as the exhibits they housed. Expos were architectural concours, opportunities for architects to experiment with solutions that would be too radical for more permanent commissions.

Osaka similarly became a venue for cutting-edge architectural practice and criticism.[43] One of the most prominent and visible influences on site was that of metabolism, which had emerged a decade earlier among a group of young architects, including Kikutake Kiyonori and Kurokawa Kishō, who published the group's manifesto in 1960, with the subtitle 'proposals for a new urbanism'.[44] Isozaki was also caught up in the excitement, emerging into prominence at the same time with plans for a 'City in the Air'.[45] Metabolism sought to move beyond the marriage of form and function prescribed by international modernism. The fixed structures that this generated were now revealed as incapable of responding to ever-increasing demands on the urban environment. Instead, buildings should be conceived as a system of interchangeable parts that could be replaced at different rates and as circumstances demanded. The theory proved easier than the practice. Over the next decade, designs for 'mega-structures' proliferated, but few made their way from drawing board to city street. In some ways, therefore, the Expo was metabolism's swansong. Kurokawa and Kikutake were both well-represented on site, the former most spectacularly with the Takara Beautilion, a 'tree structure' with the 'potential to extend, or replicate horizontally and vertically depending on necessity' (but here housing, incidentally, an exhibit devoted to the 'Joy of Being Beautiful').[46] Isozaki, meanwhile, had been delegated by Tange to work on the Festival Plaza, whose modular construction and multiple functions both drew on metabolist insights (fig. 6).

In retrospect, Isozaki ruefully admitted that the Expo did not work out quite as he had imagined, in large part because of Okamoto's efforts to represent a suppressed tradition. At the Expo, Tarō had smuggled 'things you really didn't want to see' into the avant-garde site. Subsequently, the Tower had survived, while the brave new architecture had vanished. And so, Isozaki averred, 'my first impression … [was,] I've lost!', prompting a personal turn toward questions of representation and identity.[47] But hindsight is misleading here, in describing the situation at the time as a confrontation between modernism and tradition. It would also be wrong to suggest that the only architectural shape of things to come was a retreat from the metabolist emphasis on structure to a preoccupation with the Japanese qualities of space. A better guide is a 1966 essay on the 'invisible city', which marked Isozaki's own departure from metabolism. Just as the structuralist turn of his metabolist colleagues had subsumed the functionalist emphasis of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne, so the time had come, he argued, to incorporate the earlier insights in a cybernetic understanding of the city: 'the elements comprising the city should not be understood only in terms of their external form, but rather as a complex of various invisible systems.'[48]

Nor was Isozaki alone in his turn toward system thinking. For many intellectuals, Japan was moving toward a post-industrial, information society.[49] The cities of the future had to be conceived in the first instance as nodes in a transport and communication network, modelled as solutions to problems of coordination and designed through collaborative endeavour. At the Expo, as a model for such a city, the collaboration was overseen by Tange Kenzō. Tange had first emerged as a prominent figure with his design for the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, opened in 1955. Already by 1960, with a young Isozaki working in his office, he had moved from individual buildings to urban development, with a plan for the capital, which proposed spanning Tokyo Bay in order to provide a new infrastructure, facilities, and housing for a city of 10 million. Postwar Japanese development afforded little possibility for a full-scale implementation of these ideas on a permanent basis, but the Expo afforded him an opportunity to begin with a clean slate.[50]

The planning process was not an untroubled one. In its early stages, Tange shared responsibility with Nishiyama Uzō, an architect based at Kyoto University.[51] Nishiyama was insistent that there had to be some kind of relationship between the Expo as a site, 'providing transport and other services, smoothly regulating the whole', and the contents of the exhibits. Moreover the Expo as a whole had to reflect the domestic and international conditions of the time. For Nishiyama, 'progress and harmony' were disingenuous given the Cold War, but if the Expo were indeed serious about these claims, it would have to give them substance in the form of a Symbol Zone anchored on a Festival Plaza.[52] Tange agreed and both became core elements of the site. Repeatedly, he supported Nishiyama and echoed Okamoto by characterizing the Expo as a festival (albeit with a rather different gloss: an opportunity not to consume surplus, but to foster exchange). Nor was Tange immune to the more general problem of representation, the question of what the Expo might mean. Eventually, the site as a whole could be read as a symbol. 'In the [final] plan ... a metaphoric structure involving botanical trunk, branches, and flowers was employed; but the trunk of the structure was deliberately referred to as the Symbol Zone.'[53]

For Tange, however, the relationship between symbol and structure was a particular one. Two points are key here. First, the importance of a space for the message of the expo was clear, but the content of that message could remain indeterminate. Making meaning was one among a number of systems, which the structure of the site needed to accommodate in order for the Expo to function. Second, the structure of the site, and so its metaphoric significance, could not be determined ab initio, but rather had to emerge as technical solutions during the process of design. That process was one governed not by questions of meaning but by problems of numbers. Nishiyama and his colleagues had already produced what became the first draft of the final plan. Tange emphasized, however, that this was no more than an 'image plan'.[54] Only with visitor estimates, and some sense of transport infrastructure, could the site begin to take concrete form. The Association liked what they were hearing. As the estimates were refined, during the work for the third draft, initiative passed from Nishiyama to Tange, allowing the latter to be credited with the master plan. It became clear that a single main gate would produce an unacceptable amount of congestion. With four sub-gates came the opportunity to add 'four branches to the trunk of the symbol zone', equipped with moving walkways, thus creating 'arteries for moving visitors'.[55] And with this, the final solution took shape.

The master plan provided the basic facilities: the trunk in the form of the symbol zone; the branches, comprising the 'Moving Pedestrian Way', the seven sub-plazas, and the sub-gates; and the utilities and other services necessary to ensure the smooth running of the whole. The branches in turn were 'connected to each of the pavilions which could be compared to flowers, in order to provide a smooth flow of spectors [sic]'.[56] Given the unifying structure, there was no need to exercise any control over the pavilions themselves: '[we] let each pavilion be absolutely free.'[57] In order to ensure that the population could move, the attractions had to be dispersed. The pavilions of the US, USSR, and Japan were placed strategically around the edge of the site. Subsidized space for developing nations was provided in shared structures toward the centre. Nor was Tange uninterested in what was done with the spaces provided by his plan. Coordination with Okamoto's group went well. 'Okamoto inserted a theme space within the basic three-dimensional space we had thought up. … The first time I saw the plans I was delighted. Within the mechanical realization of the site as a whole, [here was] something human … .'[58] But content was someone else's responsibility, architectural solutions could be delegated. Tange could confine his own attention to the core structures and invisible systems that would enable Okamoto and the rest to do their thing, whatever that might be.

To claim that Tange could afford to be indifferent to what was put on display is not to condemn the latter to insignificance. The success of the Expo was measured, baldly, by the numbers of visitors who passed through its turnstiles. In order to get them to do so, it needed headliners and headlines. Okamoto was the former, Satō provided the latter. But they were only two of many, who sought to turn the space provided at the Expo to their own communicative ends. The messages emanating from the site, not least the stories documenting the scale of preparation, were coordinated in a vast publicity campaign, to ensure ongoing media coverage and public awareness. Publicity was coordinated in turn with numerous other sub-systems, both within the Expo and beyond, in order to ensure that exhibits and visitors could get to and from the site and that both could be accommodated when they got there. Perhaps the proudest boast of the Official Report was the information system that allowed the authorities to integrate these sub-systems, to monitor activity throughout the site, and thereby to coordinate any necessary response. Equally, it was only when a system failed and the movement stopped that the Expo as a whole threatened to grind to a halt. On 5 September, 835,832 people descended on a site designed to hold a maximum of 600,000, overwhelming both transport and site capacity. (Soon enough, predictably, excess became success: the failure to predict such a number was itself rendered into the spectacle of front page news. There was some consolation in the fact that the number in question comfortably exceeded the previous daily record of 703,664 at the Brussels Expo of 1958.)[59]

The Expo was designed to give an account of the world in terms of 'progress and harmony'. The theme itself was up for debate, however: there was space both for technocratic solution and dystopian future. The Expo could accommodate both. More critically, in order to stage such a spectacle, the authorities had to plan for the predictable, but account for contingency. In similar fashion, if we are to understand the Expo, and the logic of spectacle that it embodied, we need to account for both medium and message, to acknowledge the possibility both of motivated display and indifferent system. To characterize the Expo as a whole in terms of indifference, however, is not to dismiss the ideological nature of the work that it did. Interpellation does not require an apparatus to make its subjects believe something in particular about what he or she sees in front of her or him. Yoked to spectacle, the job is rather to get the subject to perform adequately as, for example, expo visitor: to get him or her on to the train and into the site and to police the boundaries of behaviour once there. Osaka garnered larger visitor numbers than any other expo in history. As important, it catalyzed a boom in domestic tourism that has continued down to the present, reinforcing a shift from industrial production to individual consumption as the engine of economic growth.[60] As far as the state was concerned, the Expo and its visitors performed more than adequately.

Finally, to claim that Expo '70 could afford to be indifferent to questions of representation is not to suggest that the same is true of spectacle in other times and places. It may well be the case that their universal aspirations and accessibility make expos somewhat different from the more controlled display environments of museums and commemorations, the choreographed displays of Disneyland and Nuremberg. The latter two examples suggest a greater coincidence between medium and message (and behaviour) than is ever possible at a world's fair. Even here, however, it may be useful to examine how such motivated displays can discipline the complexity inherent in sites of such size. It would seem to be the case, moreover, that the trend toward indifference is one that has increased over time. In the nineteenth century, expos too exhibited a much greater concern with questions of meaning: unsuitable exhibits, proper classification, and appropriate deportment were ongoing headaches for exhibition authorities. Over time, however, the emphasis shifted from regulation to accommodation. Perhaps expos were simply ahead of the curve. By 1970, artists too had realized that the rules of the game were changing. Investigation was shifting from the spectacular potential of protest and happening to the systems within which such events could be accommodated.[61] Such an investigation continues to be important in the present. Not least, it might shed some light on why a museum founded in 1852 to support and encourage excellence in art and design could provide space in 2007 to explore the 'evolving image' of an Australian pop icon.[62] The simple answer, as at the Osaka Expo, is numbers, but this in turn only raises the question of whether the indifference between medium and message is now absolute.

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[1] *Asahi Shimbun*, 27 April 1970, 15. See also Satō Hideo, 'Taiyō no tō o senkyo shite kara: banpaku o mioroshite kangaeta koto', *Chūō Kōron*, November 1970, 188-96.

[2] The best introduction to Okamoto's work at the Expo is the catalogue of a recent retrospective exhibition. Kawasaki-shi Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, ed., *Okamoto Tarō: Expo 70: Taiyō to tō kara no messeeji*, Kawasaki, 2000.

[3] For the master plan, see Commemorative Association for the Japan World Exposition, *Japan World Exposition, Osaka, 1970: Official Report*, Suita, 1970, volume 3, 158-73. For an overview of the site, see Japan Association for the 1970 World Exposition, *Expo '70 Official Guide*, Suita, 1970.

[4] For the general history of Japan at the exhibition, on which the following is based, see Yoshida Mitsukuni, *Bankoku Hakurankai: Gijutsu Bunmeishiteki ni*, Tokyo, 1985, Yoshimi Shun'ya, *Hakurankai no Seijigaku: Manazashi no Kindai*, Tokyo, 1992, and Yoshimi Shun'ya, *Banpaku Gensō: Sengo Seiji no Jubaku*, Tokyo, 2005. In English, Ellen P. Conant, 'Refractions of the rising sun: Japan's participation in international exhibitions, 1862-1910', in Tomoko Sato and Toshio Watanabe, eds., *Japan and Britain: An Aesthetic Dialogue 1850-1930*, London, 1991, and Angus Lockyer, 'Japan at the Exhibition, 1867-1970', PhD diss., Stanford University, 2000.

[5] For an introduction to the various aspects of postwar Japanese history, see Andrew Gordon, ed, *Postwar Japan as History*, Berkeley, 1993.

[6] For the relationship between planning and 'big events', focusing on the 1975 Okinawa Expo, see Tada Osamu, *Okinawa Imēji no Tanjō: Aoi Umi no Karuchuraru Sutadīzu*, Tokyo, 2004. For a critical analysis of postwar expos in Japan, see Yoshimi, *Banpaku Gensō*.

[7] See Kazuko Tsurumi, 'Some Comments on the Japanese Student Movement in the Sixties', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5.1, 1970, 104.

[8] Henry DeWitt Smith, 'The Origins of Student Radicalism', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5.1, 1970, 87.

[9] Tsurumi, 'Some Comments', 107-9. For a more extensive contemporary analysis of the movement, exploring the multiple factions and mindsets, see Ichiro Sunada, 'The Thought and Behavior of Zengakuren: Trends in the Japanese Student Movement', *Asian Survey* 9.6, 1969, 457-474, and Gavan McCormack, 'The Student Left in Japan', *New Left Review* 65, 1971, 37-53. For a different backdrop and snapshot of the state of things just prior to the opening of the Expo, see Lawrence W. Beer, 'Japan, 1969: 'My Homeism' and Political Struggle', *Asian Survey* 10.1 (1970), 43-55.

[10] Tsurumi, 'Some Comments', 111.

[11] McCormack, 'The Student Left', 45-47. See also Patricia Steinhoff, 'Hijackers, Bombers, and Bank Robbers: Managerial Style in the Japanese Red Army', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 48.4, November 1989, 724-740.

[12] Except where otherwise noted, the following is drawn from Satō's own account of his occupation of the Tower, 'Taiyō no tō'.

[13] *Asahi Shimbun*, 27 April 1970, 15.

[14] *Asahi Shimbun*, 16 April 1970, evening edition, 10.

[15] *Medama no otoko*. This was one of a number of labels affixed to Satō over the course of his stay.

[16] *Asahi Shimbun*, 3 May 1970, 15. After the initial shock of his appearance, there was little to report until they could begin to discuss the prospects for his imminent surrender or demise. The article notes that despite Satō's protestations, medical opinion suggests that after 140 hours he will reach his physical limits.

[17] 'Medama noritori geki, isshukan maku', *Asahi Shimbun*, 4 May 1970, 15.

[18] Satō, 'Taiyō no tō'.

[19] See, for example, the official photograph album. Nihon Bankoku Hakurankai Kinen Kyōkai, *Nihon Bankoku Hakurankai kōshiki kiroku shashinshū*, Suita, 1971.

[20] Osaka-fu Keisatsu Bankokuhaku Kiroku Henshu Iinkai, ed, *Nihon Bankoku Hakurankai no Keisatsu Kiroku*, Osaka, 1971.

[21] Alexandra Munroe, 'Morphology of Revenge: The Yomiuri Indépendant Artists and social protest tendencies in the 1960s', in Alexandra Munroe, ed, *Japanese art after 1945: scream against the sky*, New York, 1994, 160. See Sawaragi Noi, *Kuroi taiyō to akai kani: Okamoto Tarō no Nihon*, Tokyo, 2003, for a complete account of Okamoto's life and work.

[22] Okamoto Tarō, *Konnichi no geijutsu*, 1954, cited in Munroe, 'Morphology of Revenge', 154.

[23] Okamoto, 'Dentō to wa nanika?', in *Watashi no gendai bijutsu*, Tokyo, 1963, cited in Alexandra Munroe, 'Circle: Modernism and Tradition', in Munroe, *Japanese art after 1945*, 128, 133.

[24] Isozaki Arata, 'As witness to postwar Japanese art', in Munroe, *Japanese art after 1945*, 28.

[25] 'Jōmon earthenware exudes the smell of Japanese soil and groans under its weight. So robust and relentless--it is tense because it is holding back its explosive energy. Its beauty is almost terrifying--I sense the resonance of an extraordinarily vital rhythm theat echoes in the bottom of my stomach. I feel that I can finally stretch my legs, excited with my discovery of the hidden pulse of the nation. This is what I was looking for'. Okamoto, 'What is tradition?', in Munroe, *Japanese art after 1945*, 382.

[26] Sawaragi uses the 'black holes' as the starting-point for his own reevaluation of Okamoto. *Kuroi taiyō.*

[27] Alexandra Munroe, 'The laws of situation: Mono-ha and beyond the sculptural paradigm', in Munroe, *Japanese art after 1945*, 259.

[28] 'Festival' is *matsuri*, 'monstrous' is *berabō*. For example, 'Bankokuhaku e no kitai to fuan' [Hopes and concerns for the Expo], *Asahi Jaanaru*, 22 October 1967; Okamoto Tarō, 'Bankokuhaku ni kaketa mono' [What I've staked on the Expo], in *Nihon Bankokuhaku: Kenchiku, Zōkei*, 1971, reprinted in Kawasaki-shi Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, *Okamoto Tarō*, 6-9. For an extended analysis of what Okamoto meant by these terms, see Sawaragi, *Kuroi Taiyō*. For *matsuri*, 208-26, and for *berabō*, 189-207.

[29] The most useful overview of the project is Kawasaki-shi Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, *Okamoto Tarō*. In English, see *Official Report*, volume 1, 477-95. Sawaragi also provides a tour of the exhibit, but ends it inside the tower, before the emergence into midair and the future. *Kuroi Taiyō*, 170-88.

[30] The interviewer, Yanobe Kenji, has made his artistic career in large part through the exploration of the Expo as providing not a city but the ruins of the future, not least in a recent recreation of Satō's performance of resistance inside the Tower of the Sun. Gunhild Borggreen, 'Ruins of the Future: Yanobe Kenji Revisits Expo '70', Performance Paradigm 2 (March 2006), 125.

[31] Kawasaki-shi Okamoto Tarō Bijutsukan, *Okamoto Tarō*.

[32] *Bijutsu Techō*, 52.794, October 2000.

[33] Sawaragi, *Kuroi Taiyō*. Okamoto is also beginning to reappear on the Western radar. Bert Winther-Tamaki suggests that Okamoto's Tower might also be understood in terms of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's work on globalization, as 'ritualistically digesting and rejuventating the multitudes, symbolically unleashing biopower unyoked from the hegemony of the bipolar framework of the Cold War'. 'Idol to Globalization: Okamoto Tarō's Tower of the Sun, 1970', paper delivered at Rajikaru! Experimentations in Japanese Art 1950-1975, conference at Getty Center, 27-29 April 2007. Abstract at: http://www.ponja-genkon.net/pdf/28_Sympo_Abstract_Bio_2.pdf; accessed 14 April 2007.

[34] Kushima Tsutomu, a self-described 'Sunday researcher', has recently produced a celebration of the Expo, combining the author's memories and souvenirs from the time with a number of interviews. For one respondent, who would have been seven during the Expo, 'the inside [of the Tower] was empty'. *Maboroshi Bankoku Hakurankai*, Tokyo, 2005, 188-90.

[35] For the official statistics on visitor behaviour, including queuing, see *Official Report*, volume 2, 371-2. For media comment, *Asahi Shinbun*, 9 September 1970, evening edition, 15.

[36] For the Association's own account, see *Official Report*, volume 1, 43-57 and passim.

[37] *Asahi Shimbun*, 6 February 1970, 10.

[38] For example, Komatsu Sakyō, 'Nippon, 70 nendai zengo. Dokyumento: orinpikku kara bankokuhaku e', *Bungei Shunju*, 49.2, 220-70.

[39] One of the contemporary criticisms and retrospective puzzles of the Expo was the extent to which leading intellectuals, artists, and architects, who had been associated with progressive causes during the 1950s and 1960s, were willing to participate in what some identified as a state apparatus. See Yoshimi, *Hakurankai no Seijigaku*, 222-6.

[40] The Crystal Palace for London 1851 and the massive oval exhibition hall for Paris 1867 are examples of the former, Chicago 1893 and St Louis 1904 of the latter. See Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939*, Manchester, 1988 and Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916*, Chicago, 1984, for general accounts.

[41] See Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, and Robert Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions*, Chicago, 1993.

[42] Inoue Shōichi, 'Pari bankoku hakurankai Nihonkan, 1937: Japonizumu, modanizumu, posutomodanizumu', in Yoshida Mitsukuni, ed, *Bankoku Hakurankai no Kenkyû*, Kyoto, 1986, 133-56.

[43] See the numerous special issues of leading architectural journals dedicated to the Expo: *Kenchiku Zasshi*, 85 (1021), March 1970; *Kenchiku Bunka*, 282, April 1970; *Shin Kenchiku*, 45 (5), May 1970.

[44] For a brief introduction to metabolism, see David B. Stewart, *The Making of a Modern Japanese Architecture*, Tokyo, 1987, 177-85. See also Kurokawa Kishō, *Metabolism in Architecture*, Boulder, 1977.

[45] Stewart, *The Making*, 219-22.

[46] Kurokawa was also responsible for the Toshiba IHI Pavilion, composed of four 'structurally independent parts' but constructed for the most part from a single structural element; and a capsule house suspended from the roof of the Theme Pavilion. Kisho Kurokawa, 'Works and Projects: 1970s', http://www.kisho.co.jp/page.php/211 (accessed 14 April 2007). Kikutake had built the Expo Tower, standing at the southernmost edge of the site and facing the Tower of the Sun, confronting the latter's human form with a steel lattice, from which geodesic spheres were suspended, to provide observation platforms and a wireless relay station.

[47] Sawaragi, 'Nihon toiu 'warui basho'', cited in Sawaragi, *Kuroi Taiyō*, 199.

[48] Cited in Sawaragi, *Kuroi Taiyō*, 195. For an introduction to Isozaki, see Stewart, *The Making*, 219-67.

[49] For one example, see the sixteen-volume series, Usui Yoshimi, ed, *Gendai no Kyōyō*, Tokyo, 1966-68.

[50] For Tange's career until the mid-1960s, see Stewart, *The Making*, 164-85. Also Zhongjie Lin, 'City as process: Tange Kenzo and the Japanese urban utopias, 1959–1970', PhD diss, University of Pennsylvania, 2006.

[51] Both published their own accounts of the process. Nishiyama Uzō, 'Bankokuhaku kaijō keikaku: chōsa kara kikaku e', *Kenchiku Zasshi*, 85 (1021), March 1970, 193-9.

Tange Kenzo, 'Bankokuhaku no keikaku to mirai toshi', *Kenchiku Bunka*, 282.4, April 1970, 71-76.

[52] Nishiyama, 'Bankokuhaku kaijō keikaku', 194-8.

[53] Kenzo Tange, 'My Experiences,' *SD*, 184, January 1980, 187. See also Mainichi Shinbunsha, *Here Comes EXPO '70*, Tokyo, 1968, 17.

[54] Tange, 'Bankokuhaku no keikaku', 71.

[55] Tange, 'Bankokuhaku no keikaku', 71-2.

[56] 'Master plan for EXPO '70 and master design of trunk facilities,' *SD*, 184, 60.

[57] Tange, 'Bankokuhaku no keikaku', 72.

[58] Tange, 'Bankokuhaku no keikaku', 75.

[59] *Asahi Shinbun*, 6 September 1970, 1. For the official account of visitor numbers, see *Official Report*, volume 2, 362-70.

[60] See Marilyn Ivy, 'Itineraries of Knowledge: Transfiguring Japan', in *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*, Chicago, 1995.

[61] Donna de Salvo, ed, *Open Systems: Rethinking Art c. 1970*, London, 2005.

[62] Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Kylie – The Exhibition', http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/fashion/kylie/index.html, accessed 1 April 2007.