

Exploring Chaos and Certainty

In 1969, Makoto Hatori presented a conceptual study that incorporated the externality of "sand" as a non-self-contained material. The exhibition embraced "sand" as a medium, intentionally inviting randomness and disrupting the delicate balance between things that were inherently difficult to define. This artistic exploration reflects the recognition of an emerging unknown externality embodying the age of chaos. This pivotal moment shaped my subsequent creative philosophy.

During this period, my sensibility gravitated toward traditional Japanese ceramics. In the politically uncertain climate of the 1970s, when the foundations of the nation and culture seemed to be in a state of flux, a strong desire for certainty arose. This desire was projected onto the logical structure of traditional unglazed ceramics, which embodied Japanese aesthetics. Essentially, these ceramics were viewed as more Japanese than Japanese.

However, I existed outside of the confines of historical traditions and ideologies. In this politically charged era, where the nation and culture teetered on uncertainty, I sought to question prevailing perspectives, values, artistic creations, and historical interpretations through the lens of traditional Japanese philosophy inherent in unglazed ceramic art and its profound connection to nature.

A significant political event in Japan's history was the 70-Year Security Treaty, signed in 1970 between the United States and Japan. Not only civic society at the time but also students who opposed the treaty advocated for peace and disarmament, opposing Japan's military expansion and nuclear weapon possession. Students nationwide made active demands on the government and universities, combining political and ideological protests with their autonomy. In other words, it was a student movement for political self-realization.

Although these civic and student movements had a significant social impact on Japan, they ultimately failed to converge. It is noteworthy that the 70-Year Security Treaty Movement had a significant influence on the art scene at the time. This prompted the emergence of artists with political messages aiming to bring about social change and political awareness through their work. Among them, sculptors, known as the "Mono" group, used real "substance" as their material to recreate societal elements. They found the significance of art in the "shift" that occurs through the reduction of familiar materials and the "pushback" of perspective toward the reality of society.

This exhibition serves as a narrative of the 70-Year Security Treaty at that time, highlighting the lack of subjectivity that has become a historical norm in Japanese politics. It also explores the temporal space created by the suspension of lectures due to campus conflicts at that time, which led me to hold this exhibition.