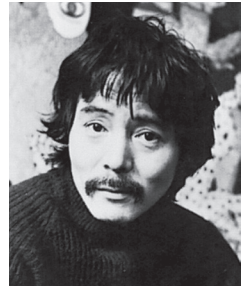


# KEY HIRAGA

“Key Hiraga’s is the instance to prove my contention. Without his presence the Biennial would have been a sadder occasion. He was represented by a mere handful of canvases but in these he revealed himself as a great pictorial artist. Waving its antennae it broadcasts a message of freedom — Which is both the imagination’s and the body’s. It has the wild, the reckless simplicity



of the conviction which identifies the moment of birth with every sentence of death — whether pronounced by human lips or destiny. The mealy-mouthed self-righteousness of vain protestations is conspicuously absent from Hiraga’s imagery. Instead of it, he extols the beauty of action — even

in horror. He describes its terrible allure for the beauty’s sake resident in every act of joy. In Hiraga’s work there is only the delight in delight and it is infectious — whatever its environment. Hence its relevance in one of the more somber corners of the world. It transmits its disease of life (which is “the fever of stone”). Like rats, it carries the parasitical vectors of a pestilence that comes from having stifled desires. It speaks of yearning and illustrates its abstract power. He endows it with the epidemic’s irresistible imagery and claims for it the metaphysical grandeur of mere beauty — a concept alien to the modishly adaptable notions of good and evil.”

Extract of a letter from Mr. R. C. Kenedy to the Art International, Christmas 1969, with regards to the Biennial of Sao Paolo.

## LIFE

**1936** Born in Tokyo

**1963** 3rd Prize at Shell Art Award Exhibition

**1964** 1st Prize at Salon Kokugua-Kai, Tokyo – New Artist Prize at 38th edition of the National Exhibition – Grand Prix at 3rd edition of National Young Artists Exhibition

**1965** Moved to Paris

**1967** Prix Lefranc de la Jeune Peinture

**1974** Returned to Japan

**2000** Died in Hakone

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

**2017** *En affinités(s)*, Key Hiraga Tetsumi Kudo, galerie Loevenbruck, Paris

**2000** *Modern painter - Exhibition of the avant-garde fiction paintings of Key Hiraga*, Hiratsuka Museum of Modern Art, Hiratsuka

**1972** *Japanese Artists from Europe*, The National Museum of Art, Kyoto

**1971** *The Crazy World of Mister K.*, Galerie T., Haarlem ; Galerie Jalmar, Amsterdam

**1969** 10th Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil

**1967** *Tableaux de Key Hiraga*, Galerie Lambert, Paris

**1966** *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, MoMA, New York

**1965** *La figuration narrative*, Galerie Creuze, Paris; Biennale de Paris

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Fonds Municipal d’Art Contemporain, Paris; Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; Kei Hiraga Museum, Hakone; Lunds Konsthall, Lund; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Yorozu Tetsugoro Memorial Museum, Towa



1



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## 1965

1. Key Hiraga during the preparation of his exhibition *La figuration narrative*, Paris, 1965, black-and-white gelatin silver print.

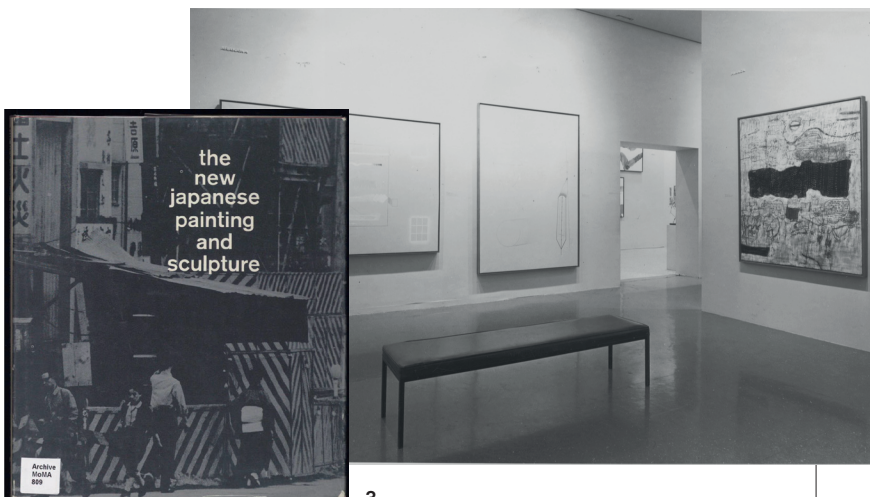
2. Opening of the exhibition *La figuration narrative*, Paris, Galerie Creuze, 1965, from left to right, Key Hiraga (from behind), with painter Toshimitsu Imai and art critic Jun Ebara, black-and-white gelatin silver print.



## 1968

6. Opening of the exhibition *The Elegant Life of Mister P.*, Haarlem (Netherlands), Galerie-T, January 1968, Key Hiraga (left) and Rithé Funke (centre), black-and-white gelatin silver print, Matthijs Erdman archives.

7. Key Hiraga, *The Elegant Life of Mr H.*, 1966, oil on canvas, 28 3/4 x 23 5/8 in, part of the exhibition *The Elegant Life of Mister P.*, Haarlem (Netherlands), Galerie-T, January 1968.



3

## 1967

3. *The new Japanese painting and sculpture : an exhibition*, Dorothy C. Miller and William S. Lieberman, Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.), 1966, distributed by Doubleday

4. Release, *Prix Lefranc de la Jeune Peinture 1967*, Paris, Lefranc & Bourgeois, Matthijs Erdman archives.

5. Installation view of the exhibition, *The New Japanese Painting and Sculpture*, October 19, 1966 – January 2, 1967. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. IN809.19. Photograph by Rolf Petersen.

4

exposition à laquelle vous avez eu l'amabilité de rendre visite présente les lauréats et les récipiendaires du :

## PRIX LEFRANC DE LA JEUNE PEINTURE 1967

Le jury, composé de MM. Agam, Arman, Bryen, Calmette, César, Crémoneini, Dmitrienko, Gontin, Rebeyroille, Saby, de Rosny (lauréat 1966), s'est réuni pour la sixième fois au mois de mars 1967 et a retenu une vingtaine d'envois parmi plus de cinq cents envois préliminaires. Les vingt artistes ont été invités à faire parvenir un envoi complémentaire de quatre tableaux d'un carton de dessins. Parmi ces derniers, ont été retenus Messieurs :

ADO  
18, passage Falguère, Paris-15° - 556-00-64

BERNARD  
10, villa d'Alésia, Paris-14° - 260-77-42

DESCHAMPS  
32, rue Rousselot, Paris-7°

KEY HIRAGA  
Château des Arts, 15, rue de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, Paris-4° - 275-00-07

KERMARREC  
128, rue de Paris, 93 - Pantin

ROBLES  
1, passage Reuch, Paris-11° - 355-66-26

ROUAN  
33, avenue du Maréchal-Lyautey, Paris-16° - 357-57-03

STOTSKY  
75, rue d'Avron, Paris-20°

SURIAN  
17, boulevard André-Aurès, 13 - Marseille

Le jury a décidé de partager le prix de 10.000 F entre MM. GILLI et URIBURU.

Ce prix, comme les années précédentes, était ouvert à tous les artistes peintres résidant en France âgés de 18 à 30 ans.

Le jury a exprimé son désir de voir s'agrandir l'horizon de choix du Prix Lefranc tel qu'il est établi actuellement. Il a donc décidé d'attribuer ce prix à certains pays européens et de le décerner tous les deux ans, attribuant une somme de 20.000 F à chaque session.

En conséquence, le prochain Prix Lefranc de la Jeune Peinture sera décerné en 1969.

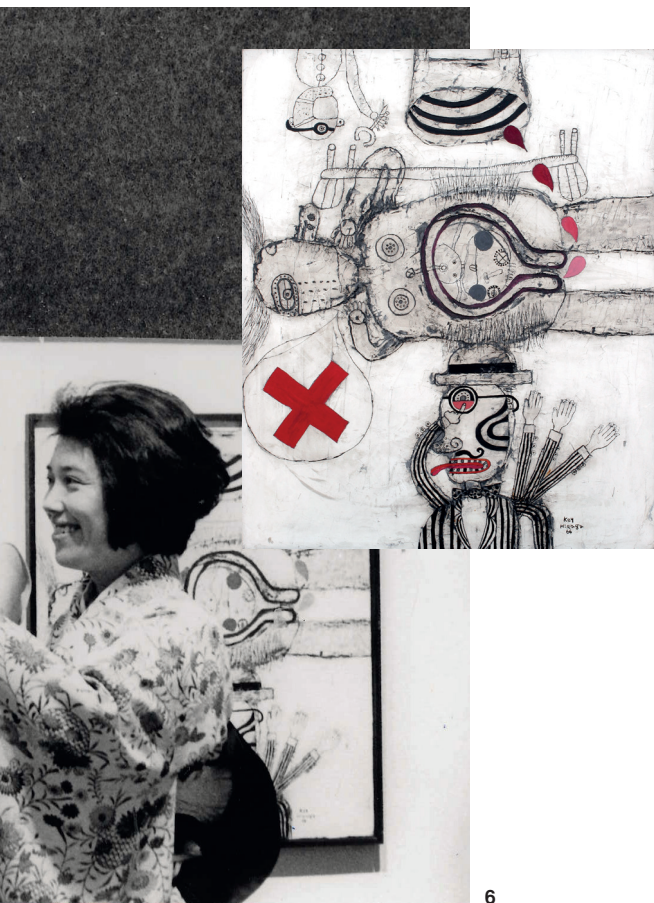
La Société Lefranc & Bourgeois profite de cette occasion pour remercier la direction du Centre régional des Œuvres universitaires et scolaires d'avoir pu l'aider à réaliser cette exposition.

GILLI GALERIE YVON LAMBERT 15 rue de l'Écluse, Paris-5

URIBURU GALERIE IHS CLERT 28 faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris-8 - 265 32 05

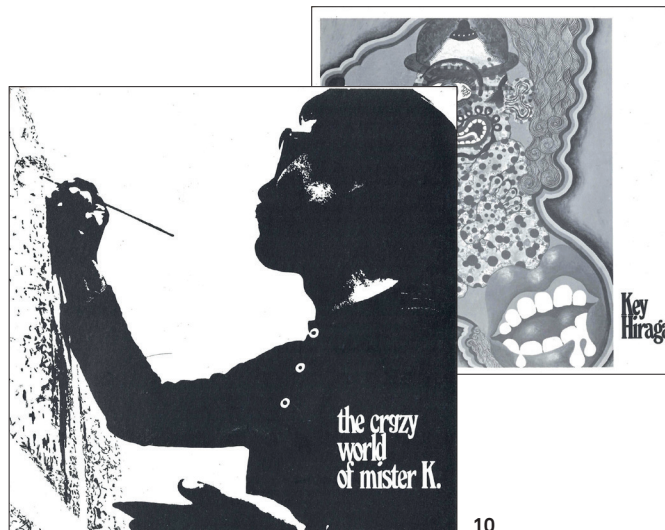
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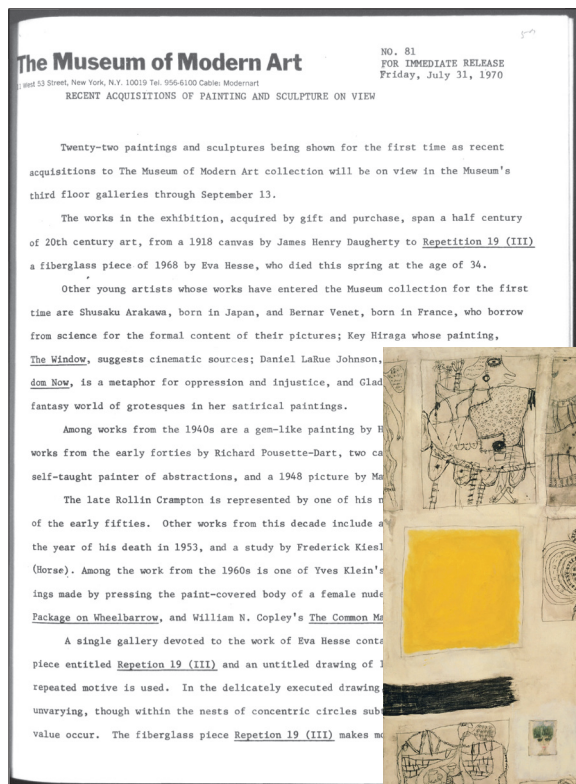
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10

## 1971

10. Invitation to the exhibition *The Crazy World of Mister K.*, Haarlem (Netherlands), Galerie T and Gallery Jalmar, April 2 – May 2, 1971 and April 3 – May 1, 1971, Matthijs Erdman archives.



8

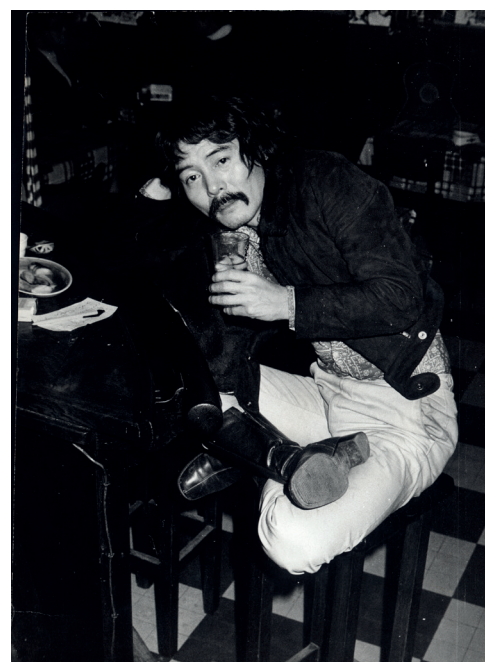


9

## 1970

8. Press release, *Recent Acquisitions of Painting and Sculpture on View*, Friday 31 July 1970, The Museum of Modern Art, [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org).

9. Key Hiraga, *The Window*, 1964, oil on canvas, 57 1/4 x 44 3/8 in, purchased by the The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



11

## 1972

11. Key Hiraga, 1972, black-and-white gelatin silver print, Matthijs Erdman archives.

“Their fantasmagorical worlds were hit by the same original trauma, the same true and monstrously real obscenity: atomic madness, and bear witness to the upheavals both in their macroscopic vision, their vision of man in his terrestrial and cosmic environment, and in their microcosmic vision of the contemporary body, of its mutations and inevitable fragmentation, in conjunction with its commodification.

Although today there is no evidence of their frequenting each other, recently gathered recollections have certified that they were friends, quite good friends, until they fell out, for reasons unknown, in about 1968. If they no doubt met frequently when moving in the Japanese diaspora living in Paris, they did belong to two very distinct “stables” of artists. Championed above all by Alain Jouffroy, Pierre Restany and Anne Tronche, Kudo was a marginal beneficiary of the 1960s trend for objects and happenings. Hiraga, who was very much a painter and draughtsman, was supported by Jean-Marie Drot and Gérard Gassiot-Talabot, the theoretician of “Mythologies quotidiennes” and champion of Figuration Narrative, who for a short while took him under his wing in Groupe OPA, alongside good painters such as Yannis Gaïtis, Michel Macréau and Hugh Weiss. This proximity may well have clouded French perceptions of his artistic individuality.”

“Key Hiraga/Tetsumi Kudo”, Stéphane Corréard in “En affinité(s), Key Hiraga Tetsumi Kudo”, Paris, Éditions Loevenbruck, Winter 2018



**En affinité(s), Key Hiraga Tetsumi Kudo**

Paris, Éditions Loevenbruck, 2018

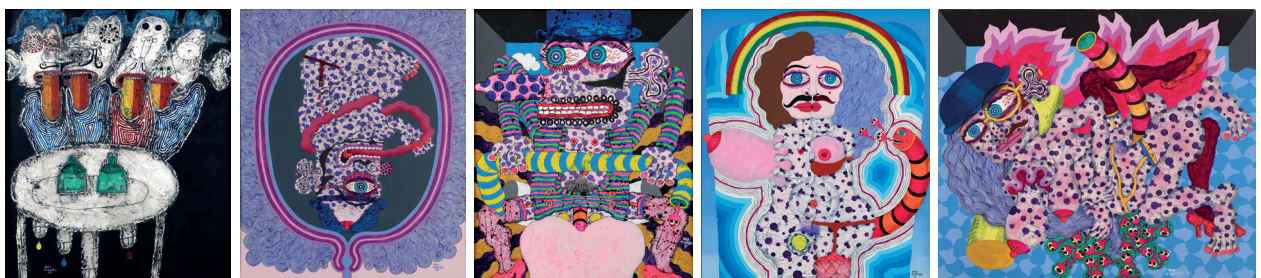
Text by Stéphane Corréard

Trilingual edition (French/English/Japanese)

10,5 x 14,5 cm (paper-backed)

Print run: 800 copies

The *Affinities* collection of books accompanies the eponymous series of exhibitions held at the gallery Loevenbruck in Paris, France, from April 2017 to January 2018, each of which brought together for the first time works – whether historical or contemporary – by two artists of different cultures or eras. The authors of the essays we have published and illustrated were chosen for the link between their own work and the theme of the exhibition.



Special thanks to: Matthijs Erdman, Noboru Kurosu, Sachi Hiraga, Taro Hiraga, James Mayor, Christine Hourdé, Amy Baker, Yasuaki Niimi, Akemi Fuma and Masao Fuma.