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It has often been noted that one of the defining factors of Japan's entry into the modern era was an emergent ideology of individualism *(kojinshugi)* inspired by Western philosophical and political thought.[1] Widely ranging interpretations of individualism, however, were spawned in relation to changing social and political conditions as Japan went from being a newly established nation-state to a thriving imperialist power during the period from the Meiji Restoration in 1868 until the beginning of the war in China in the early 1930s. In its various manifestations, the continually evolving discourse on the individual had profound consequences for art and literature. It broached serious questions concerning the locus of Japanese identity in the wake of the government's aggressive policy of westernization, opened a discussion on the nature of the autonomous self, and prompted an unprecedented exploration of psychological interiority and subjectivity in the arts.[2] By extension it also addressed the issue of the social role of this newly autonomous individual.

The artists involved with the group Mavo, active in the late Taishō period (1912–26), worked in the midst of these philosophical debates and concerned themselves with the convergence of cultural life, ideology, politics, and society. The interpretation of individualism expressed in Mavo's writings and art was one aspect of the group's project to transform the nature of artistic practice in modern Japan. A dynamic relationship between art and ideology evolved during the course of Mavo's activities, and leftist thought—anarchism in particular—affected Mavo artists' attitudes toward the individual's relationship to state and society.

Mavo was formed in July 1923 through the union of two new forces in Japanese Western-style art *(yōga):* the artist Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901–1977), self-proclaimed interpreter of European modernism, and the already established Japanese Futurist art movement. Nearly all the artists involved in Mavo had previously participated in the Miraiha Bijutsu Kyōkai (Futurist Art Association).[3] In addition to Murayama, Mavo's initial membership included four former Futurists: Yanase Masamu (1900–1945), Ogata Kamenosuke (1900–1942), Ōura Shūzo (1890–1928), and Kadowaki Shinrō (fl. 1900–1924). There were a number of different explanations of Mavo's naming, all of which differed on key points but generally served the important purpose of giving the group an enigmatic and stylish aura.[4]

After its founding, Mavo quickly expanded to include Shibuya Osamu (1900–1963), Kinoshita Shūichirō (1896–1991), Sumiya Iwane (1902–), Okada Tatsuo (fl. 1900–1937), Takamizawa Michinao (1899–1989), Yabashi Kimimaro (1902–1964), Toda Tatsuo (1904–1988), Katō Masao (1898–1987), and Hagiwara Kyōjirō (1899–1938), among others. Until the group's dissolution at the end of 1925, Mavo artists engaged in diverse artistic activities including the publication of a magazine, art criticism, book illustration, poster design, dance and theatrical performances, and architectural projects.

As the "Mavo Manifesto" of 1923 clearly indicates, the group had no pretensions to ideological unity.[5] It was a gathering of diverse personalities, each with distinct, but often overlapping, interests. Forceful and charismatic, Murayama is generally recognized as the leader of the group. He had recently returned from a year studying in Weimar Berlin, where he met a host of influential avant-garde artists and writers. Murayama frequented Herwarth Walden's Galerie der Sturm, a stronghold of Expressionism. Through Walden, he not only debuted his work at the Grosse Futuristische Ausstellung (Great Futurist Exhibition) in March 1922 at the Neumann Gallery but also participated in the Erste Internationale Kunstaustellung (First International Art Exhibition) in Düsseldorf and the concurrent Kongress der International Fortschrittlicher Künstler (Congress of International Progressive Artists), which exhibited work by artists from eighteen different countries working in a myriad of artistic styles.[6]

In Germany, Murayama experienced a staggering range of artistic activity in a relatively short time span, inspiring interesting and distinctive interpretations of

European modernism upon his return to Japan. Access to and possession of new information from Europe gave Murayama significant cachet among young Japanese artists, which he used to assert himself as an arbiter of culture and to set the tone and agenda for Mavo. In many ways, the group's history revolves around Murayama's personal intellectual development and his individual interests. At the same time Mavo was unequivocally a collective and collaborative enterprise, defined by the interaction and conflict born of group activities.

The general Mavoist conception of individualism developed in response to an already half-century-old discourse on the subject. In the early years after the Restoration, the Meiji oligarchy supported a program of industrial and technological development along the lines of Western capitalism and sought to instill a utilitarian philosophy in Japan. This new attitude drastically shifted the responsibility for national prosperity to man as a member of the social collective. Combined with the sudden dissolution of the traditional rigid social hierarchy, this new faith in humanism encouraged individual merit and ambition in the service of the nation, epitomized by the early Meiji credo of *risshin shusse* (success in life).

Following the Russo-Japanese war (1904–5), however, Japan experienced what Jay Rubin has aptly described as a "release from a total devotion to the national mission."[7] A number of artists inspired by developments in European Post-Impressionism and Expressionism began to assert the primacy of self-expression *(jiko hyōgen)* and the centrality of the autonomous individual in art. In this spirit, Takamura Kōtarō (1883–1956) penned the now famous essay, "Green Sun" (Midori iro no taiyō), which advocated absolute freedom in art and the infinite authority of the artist's personality while eschewing the mimetic reproduction of the natural world. Similarly, Saneatsu Mushanokōji (1885–1976), one of the principal theoreticians of the Shirakabaha (White Birch Society), wrote, "I recognize no greater authority than myself."[8] The Shirakaba thinkers and their artistic counterpart, the Nikakai (Association of the Second Section) all grappled with the problem of uncoupling the individual from the state by attempting to establish the cultivation of subjective interiority and self-expression in the arts as legitimate social goals. They framed their work in terms of a heroic struggle on the part of the individual genius for the betterment of society as a whole.

Yet as the controversies surrounding the novelist and renowned proponent of individualism, Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916), reveal, the assertion of an autonomous individual and its implied social consequences were perceived by authorities as having potentially dangerous political ramifications.[9] Japanese nationhood was predicated on a tacit agreement between the individual, society, and state to maintain consistent goals. The notion of each imperial subject establishing goals separate from those of the state was, therefore, a serious threat to national security. While bureaucrats had warily supported the notion of a liberated individual, hoping to harness that energy for official objectives, a divisive movement toward absolute individual autonomy could not be sanctioned.[10]

By the middle of the Taishō era, the issue of individualism was taking on even stronger sociopolitical overtones as artists were thrust into a very different ideological landscape. At the national level there were guarded feelings of optimism and confidence encouraged by the propitious political situation vis-à-vis contemporary European powers after World War I. The country experienced a rapid industrial expansion while acting as wartime supplier to the Allies, and the reopening of China bolstered the Japanese imperialist project. Along with these swift transformations came a reordering of social and economic structures. One result was a steady migration from rural to urban areas. Another was the emergence of both a sizeable industrial working class and a new middle class consisting of civil servants, white-collar workers, and professionals.[11] Despite national prosperity, little trickled down to the working classes. In fact, spiraling wartime inflation had reduced the value of wages; this, combined with crowded urban living conditions, greatly exacerbated feelings of discontent. Moreover, while Japan had not suffered physically from the effects of the war, as a participant in the world economy it did experience a severe postwar depression. This abrupt economic downturn caused high unemployment, further stoking the fires of social unrest. Popular discontent led to spontaneous revolts like the Rice Riots of 1918, which were brutally suppressed by authorities.[12]

The same process that served to democratize and liberalize Japan's historically rigid social system also generated an incendiary situation of political conflict and social upheaval.[13] Fueled by a new social awareness fostered by the introduction of leftist political thought, many intellectuals—including artists and writers—tried to locate a means by which the individual could be more actively engaged with society. Responding to this general trend, Mavo artists turned their search for a relevant mode of self-expression outward toward everyday experience and the material conditions of daily life.

Mavo artworks attest to the group's strong affirmation of unfettered individual expression in the cause of social revolution. The artists believed that by revolutionizing artistic practice they would also revolutionize society. Seeking a new definition of the artist and a new role for art, they questioned the validity of existing artistic methods and the exclusivity of the *gadan* (art establishment). While their predecessors had chosen to deemphasize the issue of national identity by professing that an essential Japaneseness would naturally emerge in their self-expression, Mavo artists believed that an international cosmopolitan culture of modernity would unite all artists. The internationalist

FIG. 1 Murayama Tomoyoshi, *Construction That Is Difficult to Name* (Nazukegataki kōsei), 1924, mixed media, dimensions unknown. No longer extant; from Murayama, *Genzai no geijutsu to mirai no geijutsu* (Art of the present and art of the future) (Tokyo: Chōryūsha, 1924), unnumbered illustration.

bent of contemporary leftist political thought reinforced this attitude. In an attempt to differentiate notions of individualism like Mavo's, which concentrated on individual social consciousness, from the previous conception of subjective individualism, the leftist theorist Katō Kazuo (1887–1951) designated the former *jigashugi* (egoism) and the latter *kojinshugi* (individualism).[14]

Murayama first posited his artistic theory of *ishikiteki kōseishugi* (conscious constructivism) in April 1923. He championed an expansion of the subject matter of art to incorporate "the entirety of life" *(zenjinsei)*, referring to the full range of human experiences and emotions in modern life. He wrote, "All of my passions, thoughts, ballads, philosophy, despair, and sickness become concrete and boil over in a search for expression."[15] But in common with many of his contemporaries in Germany, Murayama's attitude developed largely as a critique of Expressionism, which he felt was overly inward-looking and purist.[16] Mavo artists did not want to limit the scope of art; they sought to break down the borders between art and daily life. As Okada wrote in the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, "art is now separated from so-called art and is something with meaning directly for our daily life. In other words, it demands more practical content."[17]

To this end, Mavoists expanded their art materials to include found objects, industrially produced materials, and reproduced images, used in combination with painting or printmaking to evoke *"seikatsu no kanjō"* (the feeling of daily life).[18] In his *Construction That Is Difficult to Name* (Nazukegataki kōsei; *fig. 1*) from 1924, Murayama assembles an eclectic assortment of everyday items—including a spring, a small bottle, and artificial flowers—that he combines with numerous overlapping mass-media photograph fragments displaying the angelic faces of Western women, images ubiquitous in contemporary advertising. Using swatches of fabric, metal, human hair, shoes, and any other materials available, Murayama often juxtaposed the handmade with the industrial, the human with the mechanical, offering surfaces rich in textural qualities fashioned into highly expressive and frenetic compositions.

Following the inclination of the preceding generation, Mavo artists continued to reject representational art as mere superficial reproduction of the natural world, but they attempted to capture the experience of modernity by going further toward complete nonobjectivity. Murayama employed the new term *keisei geijutsu* (constructed art, a translation of *bildende kunst*) for his work, synonymous with *kōsei geijutsu* (constructive art). He rejected the notion of technical mastery as irrelevant in an age of subjectivity when absolute standards of criticism had been discredited. And rather than trying to develop a deeply personal style for the expression of an inner world, he encouraged artists to push the boundaries of art itself, to experiment with different idioms and media, stressing the important function of art as a means of observing and communicating the nature of life in the technological age.

In response to a critique of his work as lacking in lyrical value and not clearly maintaining the boundaries of pure art, Murayama wrote:

What I am trying to make and am asking for is not something that can fit into the narrow category of art. . . . I do not approve of pure art, neither its positive effects nor its negative effects. . . . For me . . . constructive art knocks down and destroys the interior boundaries between the other arts or between other areas (gebiet) *of life. . . . My work is not an after-meal tea. I have no time to get involved with the trivial matter of taste. My works do not demand appreciation; they demand understanding.*[19]

Mavo artists' inspiration for infusing their art with a so-called social nature *(shakaisei)*, championing the individual, and rebelling against the establishment was derived in part from the leftist thought that entered Japan after the turn of the century, which was propelled onto center stage after the Russian Revolution. While a number of scholars have examined the appeal of Marxism among the intelligentsia at this time, it is clear that Marxism was preceded by and contended with a potent anarchist movement that, although short-lived politically, attracted a dedicated following among Japanese artists and writers.[20] Anarchosyndicalism dominated the direction of the labor movement following the end of the First World War and remained the most prominent leftist political faction until late 1922. Ōsugi Sakae (1885–1923), one of its most popular and charismatic theoreticians, appealed greatly to both workers and young members of the intelligentsia

because he conceived of revolution as a kind of personal emancipation. Identification with the worker allowed young intellectuals to fashion themselves into a political vanguard and transcend their own elite class associations. Ōsugi rejected Bolshevism and Marxism's notion that capitalism could be vanquished through industrial organization or participation in bourgeois institutions. He believed that man must begin anew with a clean slate *(hakushi)* achieved through the complete destruction of all previous institutions and social practices.[21]

The Mavo artist Yanase maintained a similar conception of revolution. Yanase joined with other young socialist sympathizers to form the leftist literary journal *Tanemaku Hito* (The sower) in 1921.[22] Based on the Clarté movement in France—dedicated to "establish[ing] international solidarity among revolutionary intelligentsia through support of the Third International"—the *Tanemaku Hito* coterie was a diverse group of thinkers who spearheaded a proletarian literary movement in Japan.[23] Yanase's writings and artwork, like the other theoretical and literary works published in *Tanemaku Hito*, combined anarchistic tendencies with elements of Marxism, articulating an opposition to capitalism, under which he believed people become controlled by things and bourgeois values obscured social conflict.[24] Commenting on this situation in his collage *The Length of a Capitalist's Drool* (Shinhonka no yodare no nagasa; *fig. 2*), Yanase consciously inverts and distorts the advertising photographs of Western women employed in Japan as fashionable symbols of modernity to market products. He places them side by side with bestial images, mocking the marketing of beauty. He also superimposes photographs of machine parts, equating all the images as products of capitalism. The floating letter *m*'s affirm the artist's presence as commentator, and this signature mark serves to differentiate the work from the nameless, mechanically generated images in the mass media, asserting the individual's awareness of and resistance to this false consciousness.

Yanase and many of the *Tanemaku Hito* members believed that each individual had the ability to develop social consciousness, but had to choose to be enlightened—revolution was not inevitable.[25] In this respect, his ideas closely resembled Ōsugi's advocacy of radical libertarianism based on the philosophy of Nietzsche.[26] Also greatly inspired by Nietzsche, Murayama believed in the preeminence of individual will, the individual as source of all values, and the fallacy of true knowledge, all of which motivated him to formulate his own role in constructing an alternative vision to that of the state.[27] This manifested itself in a new role for the Mavo artist as social and cultural critic as well as philosopher.[28]

The escalating sense of disjunction between the reality of social strife and the state-generated image of domestic harmony prompted Okada to identify what he termed a consciousness of hypocrisy *(mujun no ishiki)*. Mavo artists felt strongly that harmony was a myth and modern life was decidedly chaotic. In a short manifesto-like statement, Okada and Katō Masao wrote, "Creation and rapid progress, a symphony of despair and wild joy, rapid, destructive passion which proclaims itself from the very end of the century. We praise the eternal flow of life. Hypocritical harmony has been destroyed."[29]

FIG. 2 Yanase Masamu, *The Length of a Capitalist's Drool* (Shinhonka no yodare no nagasa), 1924, collage, dimensions unknown. No longer extant; from *Mavo* 1 (July 1924): unpaginated.

Mavo artists' collages and Constructivist paintings convey these feelings of crisis and peril. They often couched their protests against social injustice in terms of irrationality, melancholy, and pessimism, and specifically chose the fragmented idioms of assemblage, collage, and construction because of their connotations of radicalism. In his linoleum print *Self-Portrait* (Jigazō; *fig. 3*), Yabashi transforms the genre most associated with the movement of subjective individualism into a strident statement about the predicament of the individual and his environment. A stick figure sits within a composition of abstract, seemingly unrelated swirling forms, surrounded by characters reading *kill*, *death*, *pig*, *idiot*, and *drug*. Other Mavo works express both thematically and spatially a sense of extreme crisis and chaos by employing intertwined and overlapping forms to produce an irrational and ominous labyrinthine space, as exemplified by Sumiya Iwane's *Daily Lesson of Love in the Factory* (Kōjō ni okeru ai no nika; *fig. 4*) from 1923.

Mavoists repeatedly called for a conscious and violent shattering of past conventions, deemed no longer suitable to modern experience. It was only through the

FIG. 3 Yabashi Kimimaro, *Self-Portrait* (Jigazō), 1924, linoleum print, dimensions unknown. No longer extant; from *Mavo* 2 (August 1924): unpaginated.

destruction of the old that a new vision could emerge and something affirmative could be constructed. Murayama often attributed this attitude to a Hegelian dialectic in which all things produce their opposites—hence destruction produces construction. Mavo's advocacy of construction as the language for the present presupposed a destructive stage followed by a restructuring or reconstruction of the ruins and fragments produced by this violent assault. In essence, Mavo's anarchistic impulse served the same purpose as Dada did for the Constructivists in Europe. As Dawn Ades has succinctly stated, many Constructivists conceived of Dada as an "enema—a destructive but cleansing convulsion preceding the great task of reconstruction."[30] Mavo's anarchistic impulse also had roots in the work of the Japanese Futurists who had already asserted a strong radical iconoclasm.[31]

Continuing the Futurist project and implementing the anarchist tactic of direct action *(chokusetsu kōdō)*, Mavo launched open protests against the exclusivity of the large exhibiting societies like the Nikakai. For example, when all the group's works were rejected from the Nika exhibition, they mounted their own outdoor Nika Rakusen Kangei Idōten (Moving exhibition welcoming works rejected from the Nika) in Ueno Park in front of Takenodai Hall, where the other exhibition was held. Calling the press in advance, they publicly denounced the jury's decision. They organized a band and planned to march playing music while carrying their works from Ueno to Shinbashi, but were stopped by the local police.[32]

Later Mavo again joined forces with other artists to protest against the Nika by forming the Sanka (Third Section), which was conceived of as an open exhibiting society for young artists. Like Mavo, the Sanka took a decidely irreverent stance, as evidenced by Mavo's playful *Gate Light and Moving Ticket Selling Place* (Montō ken idō kippu uriba; *fig. 5*). Kinoshita Shūichirō wrote regarding the founding of the Sanka, "the Sanka's existence signifies a uniting together to reject the contemporary art establishment where we cannot pursue our goals. With the birth of the Nika, the [nature of the] Teiten [Imperial art exhibition] became clear, and similarly, with the birth of the Sanka, [the nature of the] Nika will become clear. However, we look forward to the time when young artists will form the Shika (Fourth Section) and crush us underfoot as they advance."[33]

Along with its use of violence and destruction as social protest, Mavo also employed a theatrical eroticism and sexuality as a method of resistance against publicly sanctioned morality. Public officials and censors deemed the open expression of sexuality "injurious to public morals" because it implied the total emancipation of the

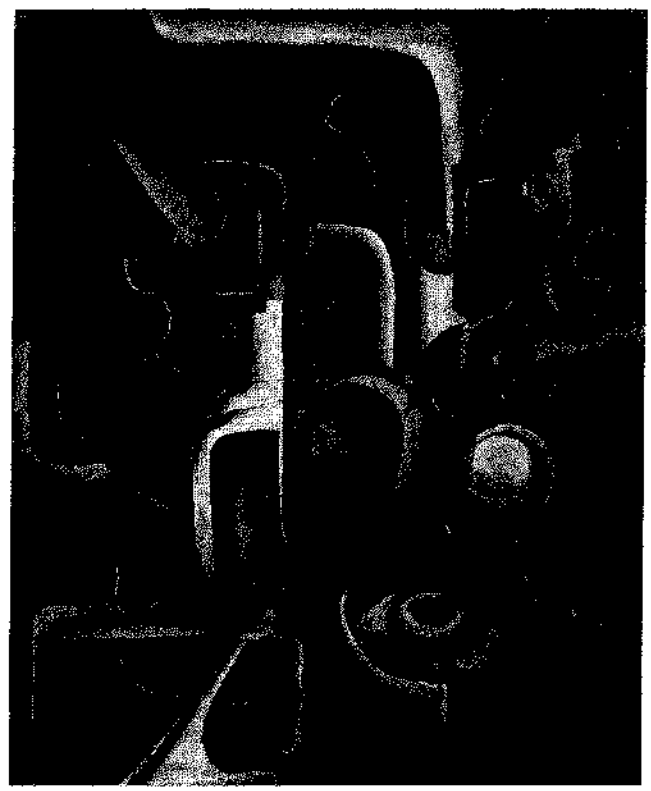

FIG. 4 Sumiya Iwane, *Daily Lesson of Love in the Factory* (Kōjō ni okeru ai no nika), 1923, oil on canvas, 25⅝ × 20⅞ inches. Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art.

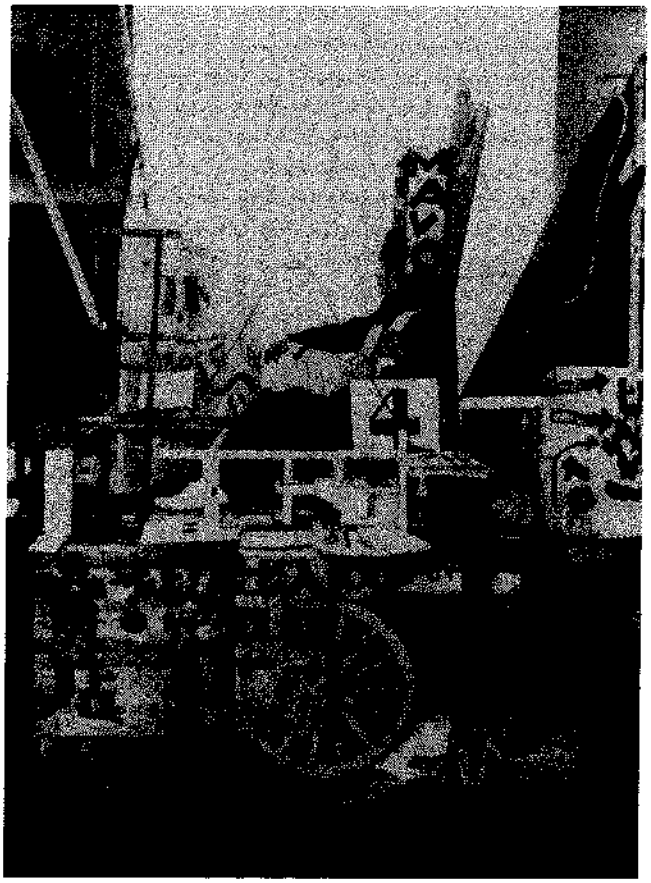

FIG. 5 Installation view of Okada Tatsuo seated in Mavo, *Gate Light and Moving Ticket Selling Machine* (Montō ken idō kippu uriba), 1925, mixed media, dimension unknown. Displayed at the entrance to the Second Sanka Exhibition at the Jichi Kaikan, Ueno Park, Tokyo, September 1925; from Murayama Tomoyoshi, *Kōseiha kenkyū* (Study of Constructivism) (Tokyo: Chūō Bijutsusha, 1926), fig. 18.

individual and the recognition of personal satisfaction that undermined familial and national structures.[34] Adding insult to injury, Mavo's performances and Murayama's erotically charged dances were often enacted in distinctly feminine attire with the artists wearing women's shoes, thus confusing their sexual identities *(fig. 6)*. In the strictly moralistic climate that still persisted from the Meiji period, cross-dressing and the obfuscation of gender distinctions were fundamentally antiauthoritarian, and were used by Mavo to problematize accepted truths about male and female social roles.[35] Because of the unrestrained quality of their work and its unabashed sexuality, Mavoists were called *kyōrakushugisha* (hedonists).

Not only did Mavo artists generate public events, they took every opportunity to write for, or have themselves written about in, the popular press. In Nakamura Giichi's words, they defined their mission as putting "hypocrisy on the front page."[36] Major technological advances in the Japanese publishing industry and its cultivation of a mass audience facilitated the creation of this new role for the artist, greatly expanding the realm of artistic practice. The major press organizations had started to display greater professionalism, earning a new respectability that encouraged many intellectuals to become columnists.[37] According to Gregory Kasza, the press was the most autonomous of the public media and defined the bounds of "permissible public debate."[38] By the mid 1920s, prominent newspapers and general interest magazines were combining political and social criticism with contributions related to the arts, often overlapping the two areas.[39] Increasingly, young intellectuals were choosing to work for the public and the improvement of society in the new realm of public discourse created largely through the mass media.[40] Like the Italian Futurists, Mavo artists realized the tremendous power of the media and sought to exploit it for their own ends.[41]

As Mavo's activities began to gain momentum, on September 1, 1923, the Great Kantō Earthquake devastated Tokyo and its surroundings. Immediately following the quake, rumors proliferated that Koreans and communists were working in tandem to destabilize Japan by igniting fires and sabotaging well water. This incited an uncontrollable rampage of indiscriminate murder and mayhem, confirming the state's worst fear of the imminence of social degeneration into chaos and leading to increased suppression of political freedom. The disorder was seen, moreover, as a tremendous setback for the national program of tech-

FIG. 6 Mavo members performing "Dance of Death" (Totentanz) from the third act of a 1905 play by Frank Wedekind (1864–1918), *Death and Devil* (Tod und Teufel; originally in German); from *Mavo* 3 (September 1924): unpaginated. Clockwise from top: Murayama Tomoyoshi, Katō Masao, Yabashi Kimimaro (center), Takamizawa Michinao, Toda Tatsuo, and Sumiya Iwane.

FIG. 7 Installation view of Murayama Tomoyoshi's *Architectural Idea for Mavo Headquarters* (Mavo honbu no kenchikuteki rinen), mixed media, dimensions unknown. Displayed at the Exhibition of Plans for the Reconstruction of the Imperial City, Tokyo, April 1924; from *Kenchiku Shinchō* 5, no. 6 (June 1924): unpaginated.

nological advancement and social improvement. Whereas the physical destruction of the earthquake itself had significant intellectual ramifications for the artistic community, the repercussions for artists like Yanase and Murayama suspected of being involved in socialist activity were even more harrowing. Such individuals were quickly identified as seditious by the authorities.[42] They were questioned, beaten, sometimes incarcerated, and had their personal property, including artworks and memoirs, confiscated.

Nevertheless, Mavo artists took advantage of the disarray of the art establishment after the earthquake to promote their work and to connect individual expression with the spaces of daily life. In addition to assisting other artists in building and decorating temporary structures for businesses and residences called *barraku* (barracks), the group also launched its most ambitious project to date, an exhibition that traveled to over seventeen different surviving and rebuilt cafes and restaurants, with two artists displaying their work at a time.[43] Such establishments had mushroomed throughout the city as part of a developing leisure economy servicing the burgeoning urban middle class, and were now crowded with homeless refugees seeking a moment's respite from the grim reality of the earthquake; Mavo artists sought to integrate art and life by injecting their work into these popular gathering spots.

By early 1924, the Tokyo municipal government and certain state agencies began seriously considering plans for permanently reconstructing the city. To address the problem, the Home Ministry had already established the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Agency (Teitō Fukkōin), with Home Minister Gotō Shimpei, former mayor of Tokyo, in charge.[44] Following this initiative, the artists' group Kokumin Bijutsu Kyōkai (Citizens' Art Association) decided to solicit proposals from the community at large to be displayed at an Exhibition of Plans for the Reconstruction of the Imperial City *(Teitō fukkō sōan tenrankai)* in April. Eager to participate in the reconstruction plans, Mavo requested space and was given an entire room. Although the room was deemed by viewers one of the most interesting and amusing among the projects displayed, the individual buildings proposed were more anarchic expressions of the chaotic city than realistic plans for rebuilding, as clearly illustrated by Murayama's model titled *Architectural Idea for Mavo Headquarters* (Mavo honbu no kenchikuteki rinen; *fig. 7*).[45] Still, Mavo artists were interested in working on architectural projects because they considered architecture the art form most inextricably linked with everyday life. One of the two architects in the group, Katō Masao, argued that architecture had the greatest potential for communicating to the general public while still being an effective medium for self-expression.[46] Murayama echoed Katō's sentiments, and in the spirit of the Soviet Constructivists, added that architecture was the "ultimate art" because it intrinsically constituted the forms and actions of modern industrial society.[47]

After the earthquake Mavo launched another major

project, the joint production of a magazine entitled *Mavo* that ran for seven issues published from July 1924 through August 1925 *(fig. 8)*. *Mavo* magazine clearly represents Mavo's artistic and sociopolitical agenda, affirming the collaborative and reproducible nature of art in the technological era while enthusiastically championing a new role for the artist as an instrumental agent in the construction of mass culture. In its material construction—employing photomontage, pages from mass-circulation newspapers, and images from consumer advertising—*Mavo* attested the inextricable link between art and mass communication in modern society, and attempted to desegregate putative high and low culture by affirming a strong bond between fine art and commercial artistic production. At the same time, its innovative use of typography and the symbiotic relationship created between text and image indicates that the publication was undeniably conceived of as a work of art. Still, many of the magazine's articles and artworks expressed the group's apprehension about the social ramifications of capitalism and the problematic inclination toward the commodification of culture.

The earthquake was an intellectual turning point for Mavo. Released after several days of interrogations and beatings by soldiers, Yanase considered the experience of the earthquake pivotal in transforming his vision of his role as an artist and in redirecting his mission.[48] Though he continued his Mavo-related activities for the time being, after 1927 he turned all his attention toward a proletarian revolution, concentrating on producing incisive and satirical political cartoons. At the same time, largely due to the personalities of Okada, Takamizawa, and Yabashi, and clinched by the later addition of the notoriously militant anarchist-Neodadaist poet Hagiwara Kyōjirō to its circle, Mavo was becoming increasingly radical. This prompted Ogata, Kadowaki, and then Ōura to withdraw from the group. It also increased tensions among those who remained, eventually contributing to the group's dissolution.

FIG. 8 Cover pages from *Mavo* 1–6 (July 1924–July 1925).

While Japanese socialists had often indiscriminately blended elements of anarchism and Marxism before 1923, a sharp division arose between these factions, known as the *ana-boru* (anarchist-Bolshevik) controversy.[49] The crippling of the anarchist leadership and a growing sense of the disorganized and unproductive nature of the movement resulted in the gradual predominance of the Marxists. Around the end of 1925 Murayama also began to question the destructive and expressionistic elements in his work, looking toward Soviet Constructivism's conception of the artist as an objective engineer in the service of the revolution. Initially he remained recalcitrant, unwilling to declare "the period of grimness and destruction" over.[50] It is clear nevertheless that his work, for example *Construction* (Konsutorukuchon; *fig. 9*) from 1925, becomes increasingly ordered, focusing less on the expression of crisis and chaos. Concurrently, he pursued a long-standing interest in the theater, becoming engrossed in the proletarian theater movement, which prompted him to abdicate his role as leader of Mavo and to join Yanase in a newly forming proletarian arts movement. Despite efforts by Okada and Yabashi to revive Mavo in 1926, without Murayama's driving personality and with the membership already splintered, they failed to arouse much support and Mavo faded.

In many ways the desire for individual liberty and freedom of self-expression that had originally brought Mavo artists together was eventually responsible for the group's demise. Mavo lacked the theoretical and organizational cohesiveness to sustain its activities. Moreover, the artists' attitudes concerning the role of the individual artist in bringing about social revolution ranged from advocacy

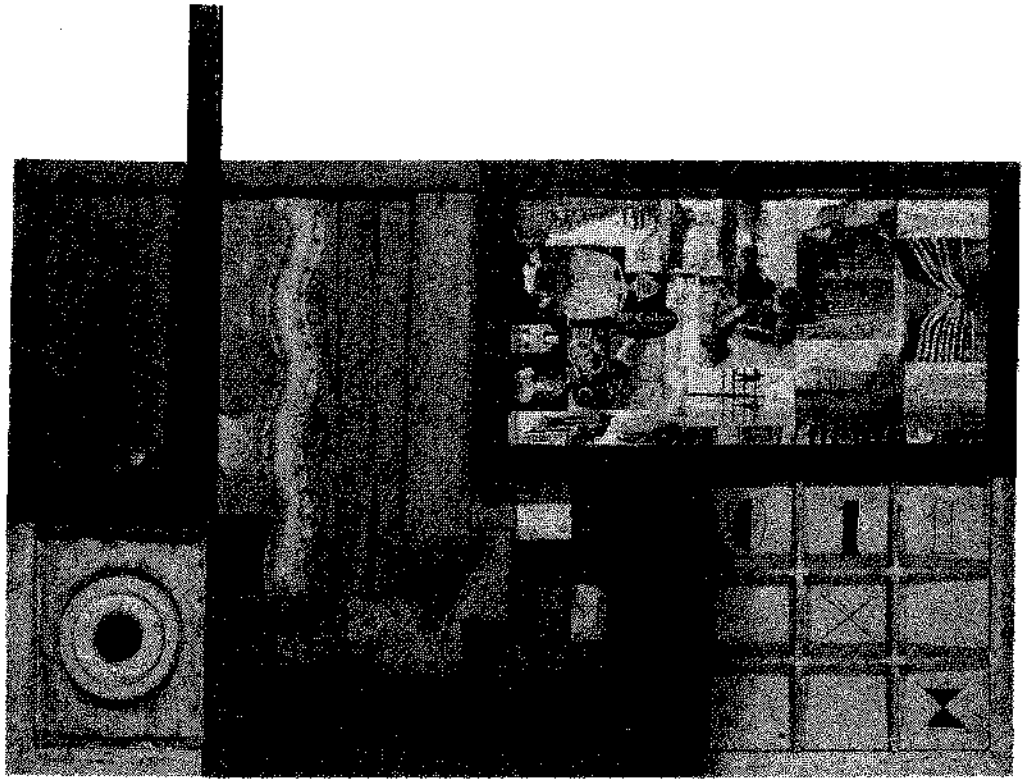

FIG. 9 Murayama Tomoyoshi, *Construction* (Konsutorukuchon), 1926, mixed media, 33⅛ x 44¾₁₆ inches. Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art.

of moderate social protest through the innovation of artistic forms and practice to complete anarchistic radicalism, leaving the members at odds with one another. The inception of the proletarian arts movement introduced a third contending attitude, art in the service of the revolution, which called for a return to representation for didactic purposes. Mavo artists attempted to transform the apolitical social consciousness of the preceding generation by directing the creativity of the individual artist outward toward society while maintaining the centrality of self-expression and the significance of art itself. But as Japan entered the Shōwa period (1926–1988), this quasi-politicized middle-ground began to disappear, and the political exigencies brought on by Japan's gradual move to ultranationalism forced artists to choose an overtly political or absolutely unpolitical life. Mavo artists split on this issue and went their separate ways. ■

Notes

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1. Japanese proponents of liberalism played a particularly important role in asserting the "dignity of the individual, freedom of expression, the equality of the sexes, [and] the legitimacy of popular participation in cultural creation and politics"; Sharon Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan: Ishibashi Tanzan and His Teachers, 1905–1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), vii. For a specific discussion of individualism in the late Meiji and Taishō periods see idem, "Individualism in Taishō Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies* 43, no. 4 (August 1984): 667–84.

2. Some scholars have attributed the new discovery of interiority among Japanese intellectuals to the influence of Christianity and the relationship between God and man in Christian dogma. See H. D. Harootunian, "Between Politics and Culture: Authority and the Ambiguities of Intellectual Choice in Imperial Japan," in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, Bernard Silberman and H. D. Harootunian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 124; and Kitazawa Noriaki, *Kishida Ryūsei to Taishō avangyarudo* (Kishida Ryūsei and the Taishō avant-garde) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 27.

3. For a basic history of the Miraiha Bijutsu Kyōkai see Kinoshita Shūichirō, "Taishōki no shinkō bijutsu undō o megutte (4): Miraiha Bijutsu Kyōkai no koro (sono ichi)" (Concerning the new art movement of the Taishō period (4): The days of the Futurist Art Association, part 1), in *Gendai no Me* 185 (April 1970): 7–8; and Kinoshita Shūichirō, "Taishōki no shinkō bijutsu undō o megutte (5): Miraiha Bijutsu Kyōkai no koro (sono ni)" (The new art movement of the Taishō period (5): The days of the Futurist Art Association, part 2), in *Gendai no Me* 186 (May 1970): 7. See also Honma Masayoshi, "Miraiha Bijutsu Kyōkai oboegaki" (Notes on the Futurist art association), in *Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan nenpō* (1973), 62–75; and Honma, ed., *Nihon no zenei bijutsu* (Japanese avant-garde art), Kindai no bijutsu (Modern art) 3 (Tokyo: Ibundō, 1971).

4. The origins of the Mavo name are still problematic. For various considerations of this issue see Omuka Toshiharu, "'Mavo' to Taishōki shinkō bijutsu undō (1)" (Mavo and the new art movement in the Taishō period), *Geijutsu Kenkyūhō* (Bulletin of the Institute of Art and Design, University of Tsukuba) 12 (1991): 22–23; Murayama Tomoyoshi, *Engekiteki jijoden 1922–1927* (Theatrical autobiography) (Tokyo: Tōhō Shuppansha, 1971), 2:305; and Yurugi Yasuhiro, "Jidai ni iki, jidai o koeta 'Mavo'" (Mavo who lived in and transcended their age), in *"Mavo" fukkokuban bessatsu kaisetsu* (A separate volume of commentary accompanying the facsimile reproduction of *Mavo* magazine) (Tokyo: Nihon Kindai Bungakukan, 1991), 12–13.

5. The "Mavo Manifesto" originally appeared in the pamphlet for the first Mavo exhibition at Denpōin Temple in Asakusa in July–August 1923. It is reprinted in Shirakawa Yoshio, ed., *Nihon no Dada 1920–1970* (Dada in Japan 1920–1970) (Tokyo: Hakuba Shobō and Kazenobara, 1988), 35–36.

6. See Omuka Toshiharu, "Berurin no Miraiha kara 'Augusto Guruppe' e" (From the Japanese Futurists in Berlin to the 'August Group'), *Geijutsu Kenkyūhō* (Bulletin of the Institute of Art and Design, University of Tsukuba) 15 (1990): 54–55, 67; Omuka Toshiharu, "Murayama Tomoyoshi to Dyuserudorfu no 'Bankoku Bijutsu Tenrankai'" (Murayama Tomoyoshi and the Düsseldorf International Art Exhibition), *Tsukuba Daigaku Geijutsu Nenpō* (University of Tsukuba Art Annual, 1987), 42–45.

7. Jay Rubin, *Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), 60.

8. Takamura Kōtarō, "Midori iro no taiyō," *Subaru* 2, no. 4 (April 1910): 35–41. Mushanokōji is quoted in Takashina Shūji, "Natsume Sōseki and the Development of Modern Japanese Art," in *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals During the Interwar Years*, J. Thomas Rimer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 277.

9. Sōseki came into public conflict with the government in 1911 because of his negative response to the Ministry of Education's establishment of a Committee on Literature, which he criticized as an unprogressive attempt by the state to counter naturalism so that it could promote its own view of a wholesome (*kenzen*) literature instead. Sōseki gave a public lecture entitled "Content and Form" in which he exhorted the government to "adjust their policies to the inner needs of the individualistic new Meiji generation"; Rubin, "Sōseki as Lecturer: Autonomy and Coercion," in Natsume Sōseki, *"Kokoro": A Novel and Selected Essays*, Edwin McClellan, trans. (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991), 243–44.

10. Individualism was seen as incompatible with the maintainence of the Japanese national polity (*kokutai*) and the emperor system (*tennōsei*), "which demanded absolute loyalty and obedience." Japanese nationalists believed that "the corporate imperial state transcended individual interests and the people." Nolte, *Liberalism*, 55–56.

11. For discussions of Japan's modern urban migration and its new urban culture of modernity see Minami Hiroshi, *Taishō bunka* (Taishō culture) (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1965); and Takemura Tamio, *Taishō bunka* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1980).

12. See Shūichi Kato, "Taishō Democracy as the Pre-Stage for Japanese Militarism," in *Japan in Crisis*, Silberman and Harootunian, eds., 219, 230.

13. See Silberman and Harootunian, eds., *Japan in Crisis*; Henry Smith, *Japan's First Student Radicals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Tetsuo Najita and J. Victor Koschmann, eds., *Conflict in Modern Japanese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); and Germaine A. Hoston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

14. Katō Kazuo, "Jigashugi to kojinshugi (1)" (Egoism and individualism), *Asahi Shinbun*, May 5, 1922, 6, Tokyo A.M. edition.

15. Murayama Tomoyoshi, "Sugiyuku hyōgenha" (Expressionism expiring), *Chūō Bijutsu* 91 (April 1923): 3, 14.

16. As Mizusawa Tsutomu has rightly pointed out, Murayama's attitude was greatly informed by the work of second-generation German Expressionist artists in the Novembergruppe and Junge Rheinland who were already vigorously criticizing Expressionism's inability to transcend subjectivity and formalism; Mizusawa Tsutomu, "Ranhansha suru kōsai" (Diffusely reflecting light), in *Mavo no jidai*, Mizusawa Tsutomu and Omuka Toshiharu, eds. (Tokyo: Art Vivant, 1989), 24. In addition to the self-critique within Expressionism itself, the virulent attack on Expressionism launched from the external Dadaist camp was also surely influential on Murayama's attitude. Omuka has identified the source of some of Murayama's rhetoric in the writings of Kandinsky; Omuka Toshiharu, "Mekanizumu to modanizumu: Taishōki shinkō bijutsu undō kara Shōwa shoki no modanizumu e (sono ichi)" (Mechanism and modernism: From the new art movements of the Taishō period to the modernism of the early Shōwa period, part 1), *Geisō* (University of Tsukuba Bulletin of Philosophy and Art History) 10 (1993): 127–28.

17. Okada Tatsuo, "Ishikiteki Kōseishugi e no kōgi (ge)" (A protest to Conscious Constructivism, part 1), *Yomiuri Shinbun*, December 19, 1923, 6, Tokyo A.M. edition.

18. Murayama, *Engekiteki jijoden* 2, 62.

19. Murayama, "Mavo tenrankai ni saishite: Asaeda kun ni kotaeru" (Concerning the Mavo exhibition: A reply to Mr. Asaeda), *Asahi Shinbun*, August 5, 1923, 6, Tokyo A.M. edition.

20. For a discussion of the history and appeal of Marxist thought among Japanese intellectuals see Smith, *Student Radicals*; Hoston, *Marxism*; and Miriam Silverberg, *Changing Song: The Marxist Manifestoes of Nakano Shigeharu* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). For a brief historical overview of the Japanese anarchist movement see John Crump, *Hatta Shūzō and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 21–43.

21. Peter Duus and Irwin Scheiner, "Socialism, Liberalism and Marxism, 1901–1931," in Peter Duus, ed., *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 6 of the *Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 692–94. For a detailed consideration of Ōsugi's thought and career see Thomas Stanley, *Ōsugi Sakae: Anarchist in Taishō Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

22. Yanase wrote regularly for the publication, as well as drawing political cartoons. He continued this work while he was a Mavoist, even after the magazine shut down and restarted under the new title *Bungei Sensen* (Literary arts front) in June 1924.

23. G. T. Shea, *Leftwing Literature in Japan* (Tokyo: Hosei University Press, 1964), 72.

24. Yanase Masamu, "Nika, Inten, Teitenhyō ni kae" (Substitute for a review of the Nika, the Inten, and the Teiten), *Tanemaku Hito* 1, no. 2 (November 1921): 112–13.

25. See Anakisuto no tachiba XYZ, "Jigashugisha no techo kara" (From the notebook of an egoist), *Tanemaku Hito* 1, no. 3 (1921): 9–12.

26. See Takayama Keitarō, "Anakisuto no bungaku to anakizumu no bungaku" (Anarchist literature and the literature of anarchism), *Hon no Techo* 76 (August–September 1968): 8.

27. For an examination of the influence of Nietzsche's thought on leftist artists elsewhere see Seth Taylor, *Left-Wing Nietzscheans: The Politics of German Expressionism 1910–1920* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990).

28. See Murayama, "Sugiyuku," 29.

29. Okada Tatsuo and Katō Masao, "Sakuhin tenrankai" (Works exhibition), July 29–August 5, 1923. Flier included in Murayama's scrapbook.

30. Dawn Ades, "Dada—Constructivism," in *Twentieth Century Art Theory: Urbanism, Politics, and Mass Culture*, Richard Norman and Norman Klein, eds. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 71.

31. An article written under the pseudonym Gokuraku Chōsei discusses the revolutionary nature of the Futurists, linking their revolt against the past to anarchism. The author writes, "it is not viable for modern men, who breathes chaos, to live in a [sentimental and pastoral] fairy-tale land," and quotes the Futurists as saying, "Beauty does not exist outside strife (*sōtō*)"; Gokuraku Chōsei, "Miraiha gaka sengen ni arawareta shisō" (Ideas expressed in the Futurist manifesto), *Mizue* 209 (July 1922): 31.

32. Sumiya Iwane, "Han Nika undō to 'Mavo'" (The anti-Nika movement and Mavo), *Bijutsukan Nyōsu* (Museum News, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum) 303 (April 1976); and "Rakusen idōten no chingyōretsu" (The unusual procession of the moving exhibition of rejected works), *Kokumin Shinbun*, August 29, 1923, 3, P.M. edition. A photograph of the outdoor exhibition was published in *Asahigraph* 217 (August 29, 1923), 16.

33. Quoted in Honma, *Zenei bijutsu*, 39–40.

34. Tachibana Takashirō, *Kore ijō wa haishi: Aru kenetsu kakarichō no shuki* (Beyond this is prohibited: A censor's note) (Tokyo: Senshinsha, 1932), 55–97.

35. As Donald Roden has convincingly argued, gender ambivalence was a widespread phenomenon in Japan and Europe during the interwar years, particularly visible in film and theater; Donald Roden, "Taishō Culture and the Problem of Gender Ambivalence," in *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals during the Interwar Years*, J. Thomas Rimer, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 37–55.

36. Nakamura Giichi, *Nihon kindai bijutsu ronsōshi* (History of controversies in modern Japanese art) (Tokyo: Kyūryūdo, 1981), 182.

37. See Andrew Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan: The Public Man in Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

38. Gregory Kasza, *The State and Mass Media in Japan 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 28–29.

39. Ibid., 44.

40. Smith, *Student Radicals*, 34.

41. Germano Celant, "Futurism as Mass Avant-Garde," in *Futurism and the International Avant-Garde*, Anne D'Harnoncourt, ed. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981), 35–42.

42. Murayama, *Engekiteki jijoden* 2, 181–96.

43. Held from November 18–30, 1923; Omuka, "'Mavo' to Taishōki": 35.

44. See Koshizawa Akira, *Tōkyō no toshi keikaku* (Tokyo's urban planning) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991), 11–86.

45. For a discussion of Mavo and architecture see Sōga Takaaki, "Taishō makki ni okeru shinkō geijutsu undō no kōsatsu: Zōkei bijutsu to kenchiku no kakawari o megutte" (Thoughts on the new art movement of the late Taishō period: On the relationship between the plastic arts and architecture) (Master's thesis, Waseda University, 1990).

46. Katō Masao, "Watashi no tenrankai ni tsuite: Kenchiku no honshitsu ni kansuru ikkōsatsu kindaigeki to kenchikuka" (Concerning my exhibition: Thoughts on the essence of architecture; Modern theater and the modern architect), *Kenchiku no Fukyū* 3, no. 8 (August 1923): 5–14.

47. Murayama, "Geijutsu no kyūkyoku to shite no kenchiku" (Architecture as the ultimate art), *Kokumin Bijutsu* 1, no. 7 (July 1924): 13–14.

48. Yanase, "Jijoden" (Autobiography), *Kirkos (Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku Shiryō Toshokan Nyūsu)* (Musashino Art University Archival Library News) 2 (October 1990): 7–9.

49. See Stephen Large, *Organized Workers and Socialist Politics in Interwar Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 31–50. In literature this division was not fully concretized until 1926; Takayama, "Anakisuto no bungaku," 6.

50. Murayama, "Handō koko nimo handō" (Reaction: here's another reaction), *Yomiuri Shinbun*, December 13, 1925, 4, A.M. edition. Following this, Murayama published a book examining the ideas of Soviet Constructivism; idem, *Kōseiha kenkyū* (A study of Constructivism) (Tokyo: Chūō Bijutsusha, 1926).

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