



Taka Ishii

Gallery

1-3-2 5F Kiyosumi Koto-ku Tokyo #135-0024, Japan
tel 03 5646 6050
fax 03 3642 3067
web www.takaishiigallery.com
email tig@takaishiigallery.com

Hikosaka Naoyoshi, *Floor Event*, 1970

Born in 1946 in Tokyo, Hikosaka Naoyoshi entered the oil painting division at Tama Art University in Tokyo in 1967. Amidst the nationwide campus conflicts, he participated in the formation of Bikyōtō (Artists Joint-Struggle Council) in July 1969. After 1970, as the antiwar/anti-Anpo struggle and the Zenkyōtō/student movement collapsed, Bikyōtō made a strategic retreat from the political front to the site of art, with Hikosaka becoming a leader of both theory and practice.

One post-1970 Bikyōtō activity was a solo exhibition series produced by the 1st Bikyōtō Revolution Committee under the concept of “each member holding a solo exhibition with admission charged outside the museum/gallery over a year.” In critique of the Anti-Art generation’s optimistic departure from the museum under the banner of “off museum,” they attempted to “discover” the “internal museum” that would emerge in their unconscious even when they exited from the institutional sites. Among four solo exhibitions realized for this series was Hikosaka’s held at his residence in 1971.

The first *Floor Event* (*Floor Event No. 1*) was executed in preparation for this solo exhibition in 1970. He initially wanted to “pour something white” and thought of using plaster, but decided on latex following the advice of Yasunao Tone, his senior colleague and a musician of Tokyo Fluxus. He purchased cans of industrial latex suspended in ammonium. Completely nude, he poured latex on his eight-tatami-mat room and an adjoined verandah, assisted by an artist friend Koyanagi Mikio. Tone photographed the act with a camera set up by Hikosaka. These two were his sole witnesses, with no other audience present. After the pouring act, Hikosaka photographed the drying process of latex, during which it changed from milky liquid to a transparent film. The dried latex film was removed from the floor on the tenth day.

Presented in this exhibition are vintage prints made from 365 black-and-white frames shot of *Floor Event No. 1*.

It should be noted that Hikosaka employed no violent action of splattering latex but slowly poured it bit by bit and carefully spread it with a hand broom. His act was akin to coating canvas with paint by a brush. His initial plan was to circulate the photographs as “information art” instead of restaging the act. However, he noticed the beauty of the dried latex surface reflecting the morning sun, and he decided to reenact *Floor Event* in his 1971 solo exhibition. These two aspects of the work hint at Hikosaka’s attempt at “dismantling painting,” which followed what he called a “Minimal art shock.” An intriguing resonance can be found with the American artist Linda Benglis’s “fallen painting,” which she made by pouring pigment-mixed latex on the floor in 1969.

The milky latex that covered the tatami mats neutralized the room, while setting the floor apart from the furniture and such and dissimilating everyday space. It effected a visual “phenomenological bracketing,” engendering a site of reflection wherein “seeing the floor” would help him to philosophically “contemplate on where he stood.” This is the conceptual significance of *Floor Event*.

In Hikosaka’s oeuvre, *Floor Event No. 1* functions as a “theme” in the sense of classical music, serving as the basis of different “variations.” As *Floor Event*, it generated two cycles of variations, the first ending in 1975 and the second beginning in 1992. A variation on the latex film on the floor led him to his signature *Wood Painting* series, while the attempt at phenomenological reflection directed him to many theoretical and discursive works, beginning with *Chronology of Contemporary Art* in 1972 and extending to the recent *Imperial Art Museum Fantasy* and *e-Leaning Art Study 6400*.

Hikosaka’s debut work, *Floor Event* launched a “helical movement” undertaken by the artist who aspired to see the essence of things in changing circumstances and refused to be content to stay in a “closed circle.”

—Reiko Tomii, August 23, 2011
(Translated by author from the Japanese original)

Further reading: Reiko Tomii, “Thinking about Postwar Japanese Art in Global Art History: A Case Study with Hikosaka Naoyoshi’s *Floor Event*,” in *Professor Eiko Wakayama Memorial Volume* (Osaka: Department of Western Art History, Osaka University, 2006) [in Japanese]