

**Arts Council Forum 2021**

---

**Production and  
connoisseurship  
to support  
expressionists**

---

**Session 1 Report**

Date and Time: February 4th, 2022 (Friday)

Venue: Online Broadcast

Organized by Arts Council Tokyo

(Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture)



## **About Arts Council Forum**

Arts Council Tokyo organizes forums aiming to address current and important themes in the field of arts and culture. Through discussion among experts from various fields, we aim to explore arts and culture-related measures that affirm and enhance Tokyo's standing as a world city.

## **Outline**

In recent years, there has been much discussion about the “value” of arts and culture; this is partly attributable to the fact that the continuance of arts and culture-generating activities is under threat as the fabric of society undergoes drastic change in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, something which has resulted in national and local governments stepping up relief measures. At the same time this situation has called into question more than ever the meaning of support for arts and culture, and there is more interest in the value of arts and culture and its relationship to people's lives. However, “value” in terms of arts and culture is complex, and changes depending on the situation and the values we are talking about. Sometimes it can be difficult to get a fair evaluation from a third party.

In order to continue long term artistic and cultural activities and set further outlooks and objectives, the formulation of a strategic plan clarifies the outcomes of activities and projects and allows us to set out a variety of values. In this forum, guests in a position to discover and nurture value in each expressive field give us their real and practical views from the frontlines.



## Session 1 Speakers

### Akiko Kitamura (SIS company inc. president, theater producer)



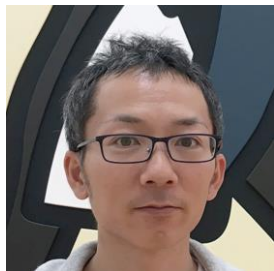
Akiko Kitamura has worked as an actress at the Kurumi-za Theater Company and the Bungakuza Theater Company's research institute. In 1985, she established an actor management division within the Yume no Yuminsha Theater Company, and in 1989, she incorporated the management division of the theater company as SIS Company, expanding the management business and taking charge of the production of the theater company's performances. In January 2016, she was awarded the Kinokuniya Theatre Award's 50th Anniversary Special Prize for Stage Producers for her years of work in stage production. In the same year, she was also awarded the 11th Shin Watanabe Award by the Watanabe Music Culture Forum as the first female producer in theater.

### Hozu Yamamoto (Tokyo Gallery + BTAP representative)



Hozu Yamamoto is the eldest son of Takashi Yamamoto, the founder of Tokyo Gallery, the first contemporary art gallery in Japan. After graduating from Musashino Art University with a degree in architecture, he worked as a secretary for Tatsuo Murayama, a member of the House of Representatives, before joining Tokyo Gallery in 1981 and serving as its representative since 2000. He is a member of the Event Committee of the Ginza Association. Advisor to Art Fair Tokyo. Executive Director of Japan Art Dealers' Association (Zen-Bi-Ren). Director of Contemporary Art Dealers Association Nippon. Special lecturer at Musashino Art University, Department of Art and Design. In addition to participating in art fairs around the world and consulting on exhibitions and urban planning, he is actively involved in many projects, including the discovery and rediscovery of classical Japanese expression and the development of the Ginza district. In addition, he is active in a wide range of other areas of art activism, including fostering young artists and lecturing to students at universities and seminars.

### Moderator: Norihide Mori



Norihide Mori is Full-time lecturer, Otsuma Women's University International Center. Specializes in aesthetics and philosophy of art.

[Mori] I would now like to begin Part 1 of the Arts Council Forum Online Streaming of “production and connoisseurship to support expressionists” My name is Norihide Mori, and I shall be serving as the moderator. I am researching philosophy and aesthetics at university, and on this occasion, I would like to ask questions from an academic perspective.

Now, I would like to introduce two guests who will appear in the first part.

Please welcome Ms. Akiko Kitamura, the President of SIS Company, a producer of theatrical productions, and Mr. Hozu Yamamoto, the Representative of Tokyo Gallery + BTAP.

First, as producers, could you tell us how you became involved in supporting the theater and art industry?

[Kitamura] I wanted to be able to both do what I wanted to do and develop the industry at the same time. So, I started by asking myself what I needed to do in order to achieve this. To be honest, I still don't know because each performance is different from one another. Although I mentioned that I want to do the things I want to do, I also want to work on something that reflects the times. If possible, I think it would be best to do work that goes beyond a particular generation, but this is not something I think about in my head and make assumptions about when I first choose a piece of work to perform. After all, when I come across something and think, “Wow, I want to stage this”, there is always a historical background that I am already surrounded in; it is not the other way around in the sense that I am producing something because of a particular historical background. As a result, I always try to think from the perspective of the audience when I first select pieces to work on.

[Yamamoto] Basically, my answer is almost the same as Kitamura-san's. Since Tokyo Gallery has a 70-year history now, there are many young galleries emerging too, and with my experience, I have been in contact with artists for a long time and have experienced various problems between galleries, so I hope that my experience will be of some help to young people if they face difficulties. That is the social responsibility that I feel.

Another thing is that most of the artists who have been a part of Tokyo Gallery since my father's time are now deceased. I hope to pass on knowledge to the younger artists on how they lived their lives. So, I guess my role is to provide a social perspective for the things that I have accumulated inside me.

Also, as I mentioned earlier, transcending the times and reflecting the times is a common theme in all forms and expressions, from literature to music. Works of art, however, still remain. With the development of video, theater and music also can persist in digital form, but in our case, the material remains, and I think that the fact that the material remains makes it a little different from other art forms. I think we also need to know how to convey these characteristics.

[Mori] You talked about materials remaining, so I would like to ask you about the archive. In particular, when it comes to theater, there are some unique challenges for archives. I think this is quite different from fine arts. Kitamura-san, do you have any comment about the difficulty of keeping a record of the theater?

[Kitamura] As Yamamoto-san said, the differences between the fields in which he and I are involved in are what aspects of our works remain and what do not. A video record is still something different, I think, because you cannot see what is happening live at that time. Of course, that has some interesting aspects to it. There is also the fact that it is very difficult to archive something and maintain it in that state.

I do a lot of translated works too. When we get permission to perform something from an overseas production and if we wanted to keep a record, there has to be a clause in the contract that says it must be made into a video. If we talk about video in addition to just the stage, for us, we only broadcast it on television, but for them, they're talking about making a video. That's why, for example, if you try to get permission to have it broadcasted on TV, you won't get it. I mean the fees for the rights are extremely high when you want to make it into a video. So, in the end, I cannot leave a video record of a translated work. Even if you find a nice translated performance, you can only stage it once, and if you want to distribute it later, you cannot do so.

Just recently, I was working on the Japan premiere of a piece, and I repeatedly asked the playwright whether we can do an online streaming or a broadcast of it. Before any contract issues came up, I was told that the author has strongly insisted that "this must only be seen live", so it wasn't possible to keep a record of it. I understand that this is something unique to the theater arts, to leave something in the minds of the audiences, and I backed down then, but I still try to negotiate to keep a record of, although there are a lot of difficult issues involved.

There is also the issue of music. For pieces that are only performed once, it's not an issue using the music, with permission, of course. However, if you want to keep the performance as video, it is fine if the music is registered in JASRAC. For anything else, you must contact the production directly for permission. So, even if you resolve issues of keeping a video, there may be a problem with the music, so there are many obstacles to overcome.

[Mori] Yamamoto-san, do you have any different perspectives on art archives based what you just heard?

[Yamamoto] I wonder if it is a case of being public. After all, there are copyrights and various other things, and the stronger such restrictions are, the more difficult it is to make the work public. However, in our field, I think that by sharing what we all own, something more creative can come from the field of art. Conversely, I think that when we try to protect something too hard, we are restricting ourselves, and it becomes more difficult to move forward.

Now, I have been considering whether we could do some theatrical attempt in an art gallery, for example, I was trying to combine works by a contemporary artist with a young female composer to see if a new kind of music could be created, but as has been said, if you don't capture it on video and record it, it will be gone after performing it once. Naturally, we couldn't perform it every day like it is in a theater during an exhibition, so we capture video and play it on monitors throughout the exhibition period. In my father's time, this kind of attempts frequently occurred in the gallery space, but as capitalism really progressed and restrictions increased, we couldn't organize these kinds of projects any longer. Values have become more and more price-oriented, so I think that finding the way to fill the gap is a major challenge we are currently facing to bring Japanese art to the world in the future.

[Mori] You mentioned the keyword “publicness”, so I would like to delve into this a little deeper and connect the themes. If no records have been left, such as in an archive, I think there are various situations where this can become an encumbrance, such as when educating others and introducing culture to foreign countries. This is particularly so for theater, but young people will be unable to get a sense of past performance if the images are not preserved properly. If that happens, I think that inevitably the number of young people who lack any understanding of old theater will naturally increase.

[Kitamura] I think at this point we should think for ourselves. I don't think there's anything wrong with “wanting to leave something behind”, but some people may feel that it doesn't need to be left behind. So, it is not a question of one being right and the other being wrong.

[Yamamoto] I recently read a book by Yuval Noah Harari called Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind. According to that book, there are sculptures that were made by humans 30,000 or 20,000 years ago. Animal bones were carved to make a lion's head and a human body. However, in the real world, we could never find something that has the head of a lion and the body of a human being. What I found very interesting was that this was created completely by the human imagination. You know, I think that people can find a lot of support in images.

The fact that the images have been preserved in a tangible form means that we are able to view how the images have changed over time if we archive them through the years. We don't know what Homo sapiens were trying to make at that time, but as such things remain, we can at least take a guess. I think that this is probably the true meaning of history. If something remains, then we can analogize the image.

I think it is very important for archives to be left publicly by third parties rather than relying on the creators themselves. I think archiving is very important and this is independent of how modern society has developed and the measures to be taken in the future.

The most important thing when archiving art is the question of how many of the works of art actually exist in Japan. No one has ever taken statistics on this. I think that few curators at museums would be able to answer right away how many of Gauguin's paintings actually exist in Japan.

The reason for this is that while it is possible to investigate what is in a national museum, it is not possible to investigate what exists in people's private collections. Japan is the only country that has so many works from Impressionists alone. I think we really need to keep these archived, and this is an important theme for me.

[Kitamura] I saw a documentary on television about this some time ago. When Tibetan people bury a deceased person, they bury all of the memorable items from their surroundings together with them.

When the program staff asked why, the locals answered as follows: “The people who died don't need anything”, “It's here”, and “If it goes away and we forget about it, that's fine, too”. Since I saw that, there is a part of me that feels that it is okay for things to fade away or disappear.

[Yamamoto] This is also important, but I think you are making a distinction between this world and that world? Religion lives in that world. So, we keep it as a world we intend to go to in the future. Therefore, the idea of including goods when we bury people is that there is something to take when going to that world; however, in the present day, the idea of the other world existing has almost completely disappeared. That is why it is important for art to remain in this world.

For example, when the President of Daishowa Paper Mfg. was asked why he had bought Van Gogh and Renoir, he said, "Because, in the future, I will die in a coffin". He was severely criticized for making this statement around the world. The thing that remains is, so to speak, what is left once the work is removed from the artist and not owned by the artist anymore. This now becomes common property and has a public nature. That is why Europeans treat art as shared assets. In the case of Japan, however, art is treated as something private.

The most typical example is the phrase "having an eye for something", which means that Japanese people hesitate to reveal to others what is important to them. Europeans think they should keep art public and have it seen by as many people as possible. There seems to be a difference between European people who think that showing things increases value and Asian people who tend to think that keeping others from seeing things increases their value.

[Kitamura] Is it a difference in the way they conceive of value?

[Yamamoto] Yes. Now that the world has come around to capitalism and share the same values through it, I think that this is causing a shock to the Japanese sense of value, and we are not sure what side we are on.

[Kitamura] At a preliminary meeting, I was told that this is the theme this time, and I told them that I considered "value is something that must be determined on the receiving side. Value is not something for which I can stipulate". I think this is only an issue on the receiving side.



[Yamamoto] As Kitamura-san said earlier, we do not think of ourselves as creating art. That is because I believe that art is not art unless someone, a third party, the so-called recipient, thinks it is art. So, although I try to create something artistic, I don't think it is for me to decide if it is art or not because this is something that history will ultimately decide.

This is the most important aspect of capitalism, but often the terms "value" and "price" are confused. In many cases, value is not reflected necessarily in the amount of money. The result is that values that are not reflected in price are confused with values that have a monetary value. For example, the price of avant-garde art has increased considerably over the past decade. As I recall, the prices of the pictures that I have sold have increased by 10 times or more. My father, who dealt in avant-garde art, died unaware of this.

In some ways, this is close to forestry. There are places where the third generation makes products using what the previous generation planted.

I don't think my father expected that much. However, when he went to an art fair in Europe, he found that Japanese art sold very little. He spent a lot of money, but things did not sell, so he stopped participating after about two fairs. At that time, he thought that as long as Japanese merchants brought their products to Europe, they do not last long unless they sell well. Then I think he thought hard about what he could do to put a price on the value of Japanese contemporary art.

So, what we have discussed today is what the role of the art gallery is, and I think its most important role is determining the age of the art. In the exhibition held in Tokyo Gallery in 1960, all the works decorated in the exhibition had the objective number of 1960 attached. I think that artists sometime change the age of items in their studios after the fact because there are no third parties to witness them doing this. They think there is no issue in doing this because it is their own work. However, it is extremely important to determine the age of art that is at an exhibition. For example, it would not be valuable to draw paintings in the Impressionist style in the current age. It is only valuable because it is dated from the end of the 19th century when Impressionism emerged. That was when Impressionism was most powerful, and they did not even have the name "Impressionism" to refer to it at that time.

In this way, I think again that the role of the gallery is to confirm the age of art. I think this is also probably related to the archiving of art. For that reason, I believe it is most important to think about what kind of work should be put on the market and to hold exhibitions continuously.

[Kitamura] Does that include selling it?

[Yamamoto] Yes. That is to say, you don't have to sell, but ...

[Kitamura] But people should be aware of it.





[Yamamoto] Yes. So, for example, Kazuo Shiraga, who I just talked about, was an avant-garde artist who exhibited at Tokyo Gallery more than 10 times starting in the early 1960s and continuing through 1965 and 1969. If you repeat this 10 times, maybe, you can create an archive that resembles the life of a single artist. It becomes valuable in itself, and in 2000, you will start to see the gain in price of works from the 1960s start to emerge.

This repetition occurs, so the role of the gallery is to handle the works of those artists they believe to be the best and continue to hold their exhibitions. Just exhibiting once does not create value in itself.

The other is the context that each gallery has. The context of choosing this artist as an extension of the history of what the gallery has done in the past is very important.

There is also the fact that the artist is working alone, so, in a sense, theirs is the world of a craftsman. Despite this, however, communication is essential, and they need to meet with various actors, scriptwriters, and so on. The role of art galleries is to create a place where various people can come and communicate with each other, and this will lead to new creativity. Once the market is established, this communication will gradually disappear. If you say that you shouldn't say bad things about other artists or criticize anything, then critics avoid criticizing them as much as possible. That is why I think the literary criticism in Japan is amazing. They say that they can feel anything quite comfortably.

[Kitamura] I think you may be right.

[Mori] How about the role of criticism as far as producers are concerned? How do you deal with harsh criticism?

[Kitamura] It's okay to be harsh, of course, we are very happy when we receive compliments. For example, if someone says like, "This is how we saw it from our point of view", That is very valuable comment. In reality, however, two-thirds of a newspaper review is often a synopsis of the play, with only few comments at the end. I don't think that kind of review is very meaningful.

[Mori] Yamamoto-san, can you comment on this?

[Yamamoto] These days, art as a whole is becoming very conceptual. Whenever you look at art, it is not enough to say it is interesting or bad. It seems that art has become something that you have to understand to a certain extent.

[Kitamura] I wonder why that is.

[Yamamoto] It is hard to just see things as they are. Because of the particular culture of the country, language is the only way to transcend this culture.

[Kitamura] However, in the end, as it is still art, I think it is sufficient for it to be visually pleasing, whatever the country.



[Yamamoto] It is not that easy.

I think that something appearing beautiful is very much related to the language. For example, we could dig into the question of from when we came to see Mt. Fuji as being beautiful. When I looked into this, it seems that there aren't any pictures of Mt. Fuji in Kyoto. In other words, since the period when the daimyo's alternating Edo, Mt. Fuji has been given a social aspect.

When you go along the Tokaido Highway, Mt. Fuji appears very large. So, Hokusai and Hiroshige painted "Fugaku Sanjurokkei (36 Views of Mt. Fuji)" and other pictures of Mt. Fuji, and they returned to their respective regions with these works and said, "I saw something like this". This happened after the Edo period, so this means that during the Edo period, Japanese people did not conceptualize Mt. Fuji as being beautiful.

When we think about it in this way, I think that we can say that there is a significant linguistic operation involved in making us think Mt. Fuji is beautiful. Language instructs us to "think this is beautiful", and this becomes imprinted on us, and, before we know it, we find ourselves saying the words, "Mt. Fuji is beautiful".

It's hard to say whether we think of what we first saw as "beautiful" or not. The concept of beauty is related to nostalgia. When we first see it, it is rare, but as time passes and we have seen things that we saw before, it transforms into something beautiful with a twinge of nostalgia in our memories. That is why I think we can say that beauty is acquired, but rarity is inherited.

[Kitamura] The same applies when we say something is "delicious". Even if you eat canned fish, once you get used to it, you may think it is delicious. Isn't it the same thing? It is not related to the input of the canned fish. It is just that your mouth or tongue has become used to it.

[Yamamoto] Yes, something being delicious is the same. Therefore, as art has become more and more conceptualized, modern rationalism has spread to the world, and the action of abstraction has taken on greater weight. At this point of abstraction, language is required. Maybe that is when it became conceptual. I also think that we need criticism.

As Kitamura-san said on criticism, though, it is nicer to be complimented first, then it is easier to introduce opinions like "this would have been better done this way" or "this element is lacking". If you start off with "this was lacking. It was not good" and then later say "but it was good", that will not be communicated to the other party at all.

[Kitamura] At least, I think that is how you should be with newcomers. That is to say, the awareness of newcomers can develop in the stages that follow that first encounter.

[Yamamoto] That is right. Art galleries that are working hard are doing so, to a certain extent, because there is something that they want to show you, so we want them to be given a certain amount of respect for that hard work when they are critiqued. So, it is important that only once you have done that you say, "No, this is not enough" or "I have seen this somewhere before". In order for people to develop, the way words are used is very important.

What makes criticism so difficult now is that it is no longer possible to restrict the critique to the field of art. After all, this extends to much wider fields such as science, so I fear that it will become more and more difficult for people to provide critiques in the future.

[Mori] Art criticism is rapidly developing, including in terms of the accumulation of art history, and I feel that it is certainly starting to spread. I think that there are places where historical research supports criticism.

What about theater? The critiques by those critics who have a wider knowledge of things is certainly better because due to the nature of theater as a form of entertainment, it seems that unless you have seen a lot of plays, you don't really have the right to talk about things. That being the case, I think that it is more likely that people will have seen more theater than fine arts for people, rather than having done a lot of historical research, so I think it will inevitably be more difficult for young critics.



[Kitamura] Yes, there are very few.

However, as Yamamoto-san said earlier, true criticism requires a lot of knowledge, so there are quite a lot of elderly people involved, as it is based on the assumption that you have accumulated a lot of knowledge up to that point. Having said that, I think it is fine to have a critique of how something appeared to you when you saw it for the first time. So, if possible, I think it would be good for young critics to critique the plays of young writers.

[Mori] That is certainly an interesting idea.

[Kitamura] As a contemporary, you can have a perspective on what they think.

[Yamamoto] Right, Kitamura-san, that's definitely necessary.

The first thing that I recommend when young people come to buy paintings of artists from the same generation as the customer. First of all, it is easy to buy things from people of the same generation because you live in the same era as them, so it is likely that you understand where they are coming from. That's why I concur with the opinion that critics should criticize others of the same generation.

[Kitamura] But, there aren't any, I think.

[Yamamoto] This is because of the pyramid structure that exists within art criticism too. I think that it is changing a lot, though. After all, there may be pyramid structures centered on certain universities, and you have to think about where you are in that pyramid structure. That's why it is difficult, but I wholly agree that critics should be of the same generation. I think it's completely fine to have immature opinions.

So, Kitamura-san, you mentioned this in an interview, but having enthusiasm is important. I think that actors need a passion and to say "this is my mission in life", rather than just showing they have acting skills.

[Kitamura] I really think that is the case.

[Mori] Thank you very much.

Next, I would like to hear your opinion on administrative support, etc. The discussion will focus on the advantages and disadvantages of receiving support and how to support works that find it "difficult to receive public support but have high artistic value". For example, I think that it is difficult for us to get behind the idea of public support for immoral works and works with anti-government or anti-social messages. I am sure there are masterpieces among such works, but what do you think?

[Kitamura] Recently, SIS Company received support for the first time. It was due to the COVID-19 crisis, and there was definitely some risk in them providing us with support, so I appreciated it. I am basically of the opinion that any form of art should try its best to be self-sustaining and profitable. If we become reliant on others, we will always be beholden to an external budget, so I think that unless we start from the point of asking how we can live within our means, we will never be able to stand on our own two feet. It is not only a matter of making good works, but also of making efforts to have as many people as possible see good works at the same time. If it is just a matter of making good works, we will need support for the rest of our lives, and I think it is okay to think about what we make from a different perspective.

Of course, support is better than no support at all, but we must think carefully about our own position. Whether you are doing it to get as many people as possible to see your work, or whether it would not make much difference if you were doing it in your own kitchen. I think it is the same as drawing a line between whether you want to be a professional or an amateur. I think it is necessary to check within yourself what kind of position you are in.



[Yamamoto] When it comes to administrative support, I think that we should consider the meaning of the supporting side and the supported side separately. The supporting side, if we take the administration of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, for example, they have a cultural policy. So, any supporting side will have the policies of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government built in. Once the supported side understands these policies, they will be in a position in which they can receive support.

That's why it seems a complete contradiction to me if anti-governmental or movements against public order are supported. At that point, it can no longer truly be against public order, and this is merely being used as a catchphrase.

So, I think that unless you accept the fact that you are being supported, you can somehow lose sight of your very essence.

I think it is very important for the side receiving the grant and the side making the grant to have a sense of mutual commitment. If not, the grant will not live up to its potential, and the evaluation will be ambiguous.

[Kitamura] I think that no matter how immoral, anti-government, or against public order, it is acceptable to provide some type of support. I don't know who is able to make a judgment call and say, "This is anti-government, so it is no good". I think that we should just say everything is art and support it.

By the way, Yamamoto-san, are you receiving public support?

[Yamamoto] I have not received anything at all. At the end of the day, I want to stand on my own two feet if I am able to do so. Recently, Japanese galleries are also able to receive support from the Agency for Cultural Affairs when they go abroad. Since it is very costly to participate in art fairs overseas, it would be good if the public support is given to young galleries anyway.

[Mori] I am a researcher at a university, so when I think about the problems facing young researchers, I want to support them as much as possible. It would certainly be a bad state of affairs in academia if only people with money could do research. It is necessary, therefore, to create opportunities so that people with real talent can flourish even if they don't have much money. Maybe this is the same in your fields as well.

How do you feel about the support of young people from a producer's viewpoint?

[Kitamura] I would say that we support young people, or at least promote and cast young people. But that does not mean that we can guarantee their livelihood.

[Mori] Yamamoto-san, would you like to comment on this?

[Yamamoto] I think it is better to have a diversity of employment. At the end of the day, there is too little diversity in employment in Japan. More than that, as there is the opportunity, I think Japan should introduce diversity in employment, as there is a wide variety of talent that can work in various areas.

I would like to ask the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and then the national government as well, to realize this diversity in terms of how jobs can be generated in art, theater, and music. Also, I would like to talk about how the education system should respond to the diversity of employment.

When I visited Mr. Ichibei Iwano, a living national treasure who makes washi paper, in a place called Imadate in Fukui Prefecture, I heard an interesting story. He told me that since Imadate is a washi production area, they offer hands-on experience in making washi at elementary schools, and when Mr. Iwano went to teach paper making to elementary school students, some of the students were better than his own pupils. He says that because of the timing of the body, when the child's characteristics are matched, he is able to do it faster than he can teach. However, the parents of such a child, even if the child has such talent, would definitely think that the child would go to high school or college and become an ordinary salaryman.

So, for example, if a system can be created to discover such talent through the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's Cool Japan project, and to find out what kind of things can be done to help that person make a living, I think the arts will become more interesting and intriguing.

[Mori] This is somewhat related to the problem of education. One issue that exists is how to nurture young people in nonurban situations.

Even at universities, it is counterproductive to create an environment in which research is only possible if it is an urban area, so the question of how to nurture young regional researchers is an important issue.

I think, at the end of the day, that similar issues will emerge in the field of the arts. Unless you live in urban areas, there are very few museums and galleries, and it is hard for you to find theater to watch unless you are in big cities. Do you have any thoughts on how to nurture that regional talent?

[Kitamura] In terms of theater, I think the problem is that it is hard to attract large audiences in regional areas. That is why we tend to hold performances in Tokyo where we can get the audience. We may talk of regional revitalization, but it is impossible to revitalize theater without an audience? I think that is the main issue.

I am sure that everyone is wondering how to develop their efforts in the regional areas, but the reality is that it is difficult to see how to overcome this.



[Yamamoto] In terms of art galleries, for a while there was a concentration of galleries in Tokyo, but recently, interesting galleries have begun to appear in the regional areas.

For example, there is a famous kitchen knife shop in Tsubame-Sanjo. The owner of the store is having a hard time finding a successor, but if people from all over the world come to buy kitchen knives, the store has a future. If the financial industry can be successfully connected to the shop, he can train his successor. The realization of this is happening through mergers and acquisitions.

So, if the financial industry also takes the direction of discovering talent in this way, I think we can find a different system and a different way of being in the art world.

In other words, in order to revitalize a region, I think it will be difficult without finance in the sense of investment. I think this has something to do with a sense of the future, and also with the need to break away from what we have done in the past.

[Mori] Well, in terms of support for the arts, the keyword “investment” seems to be coming up a lot.

We are running short of time. Do you have any closing words for the audience?

[Kitamura] I know it is difficult with the COVID-19 situation, but we are all working very hard, so I hope you can come out to the theater and see us. Yamamoto-san would you like to ask people to visit the gallery?

[Yamamoto] No, when too many people come to the gallery, we do not sell anything.

I have known about the activities of the Arts Council Tokyo for quite some time now, and I think it is wonderful that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is now responsible for making cultural policy.

I think that cultural policy is the thing that Japan is currently lacking the most. I think that the wisdom and know-how of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government as well as communication with the national government will be very important for us in the future, so I hope this can be expanded in scope to include the financial and economic sectors, too. I think investment is at the root of subsidies. This should be true “investment” rather than “speculation”. The subsidy is there to help people who will create real value in the future.

We have had a really good discussion here today, and I think that it was a very good idea to hold this event.

[Mori] Kitamura-san, Yamamoto-san, thank you very much.



ARTS COUNCIL TOKYO

