

Exhibition room 1: The era called 'Z' (Panel 1/3)

The era called 'Z'

The term 'Generation Z' is often heard these days. It generally refers to the generation born between the mid-1990s and mid-2010s. This exhibition is an attempt to consider the 'contemporary era in which Generation Z lives' from the 1990s to the present day, through works from the museum's collection.

A timeline is displayed at the beginning of the exhibition room. It summarizes the major social events that took place in Japan and the world between 1990 and 2024. Let's look back together to see what kind of period it can be said to have been.

In Chapter 1, we present works that reflect social conditions and events from the 1990s onwards. We will focus on the major characteristics of this period: 1) the progress of digitalization, 2) the frequent occurrence of wars and natural disasters, and 3) unstable politics and economics. The exhibition will include works on the subject of smartphones, works related to wars and massacres, and works expressing a sense of anxiety about contemporary Chinese society. Please compare several works and confront the times in which we live.

One of the trends of Generation Z is the emphasis on individuality, such as actively communicating oneself through social networking and prioritizing one's hobbies over one's work. This emphasis on the individual is spreading throughout society. The contemporary era is also known as the 'age of diversity', in which each individual is respected for being who they are.

Therefore, in Chapter 2, we will consider through artworks what is 'Self-identity', which is a key word in the contemporary society.

Reflecting anew on our current times through art may lead to hints and vitality for living in the future. We hope that this exhibition will provide you with an opportunity to take a fresh look at your own life in the turbulent contemporary society.

Exhibition room 1: The era called 'Z' (Panel 2/3)

Chapter 1: What happened not long ago

This chapter focuses on works that reflect society since the 1990s.

Yuki Hayashi "light/shadow" is a video work based on the movements of a hand operating a smartphone. The work cleverly expresses the state of communication in today's highly digitalized society.

In 1995, 50 years after the end of the Second World War, Saburo Ota produced a series of portraits of Japanese orphans remaining in China printed on postage stamp sheets. Meanwhile, Anselm Kiefer's "The Way of World Wisdom: the Battle of Hermann", depicts German intellectuals and Nazi soldiers. Through these works depicting people at the mercy of war, please consider for yourself the wars that continue to take place around the world today.

Alfredo Jaar's "Six Seconds", about the 1994 genocide in Africa, and "12 Standing Figures (Crowd Series)" by Magdalena Abakanowicz who was born and raised in turbulent Poland, depict human beings struggling to survive in an absurd and difficult world. These works show the strength to survive in a society where incidents, such as massacres and natural disasters, constantly put innocent lives at risk.

Fang Lijun and Zhang Xiaogang who live in a Chinese society of dictatorship and rapid economic growth, express their disquiet and anxiety about the future in their paintings.

We hope that these works relating to 'what happened not so long ago' will serve as a catalyst to draw attention to the social challenges that continue to exist today.

Exhibition room 1: The era called 'Z' (Panel 3/3)

Chapter 2: What is Self-identity?

In this chapter, we will consider through art 'Self-identity', which is a keyword not only for Generation Z but also for contemporary society. In addition to self-portraits and self-carved sculptures by the artists, this section features works that make us think about identity from various perspectives.

Going back in time, Pablo Gargallo's "Mask of Kiki de Montparnasse" is a sculpture representing the legendary model 'Kiki de Montparnasse' by extracting and composing the facial features of Alice Plan, who modelled for numerous artists in early 20th century Paris. Only her outer appearance, in terms of social status and role, is represented, as if to hint at the absence of the real Kiki herself in the inner cavity.

By repeating the molding and representing the human body with repeated patterns, Akiko Tsuda explored originality in human existence in a society overflowing with mass-produced goods.

Kinichi Shinomiya, Koji Kinutani and Hajime Imamura expressed themselves in their works. The fictional nature of paintings and oneself, the strong will to live as a painter while confronting a society, and the connection of life beyond the individual can be read in the diverse expressions of self-portraits and self-carved sculptures.

The exhibition also features a work by Yoshitomo Nara, who seeks the essence of human nature in the instinctive and straightforward nature of children, and Nozomi Tojinbara, who expresses a world full of the imagination that everyone must have had as a child.

Through these works, please take the time to think about what 'Self-identity' is.

Exhibition room 2: Works associated with Tokushima (Panel 1/1)

Let's look for things that change and things that remain the same in artworks. For example, customs such as clothing and interior decoration change with the times, but natural scenery remains with us through the ages.

Shingoro Ishikawa was a painter who was active in Tokyo before the world war II, but after the war he returned to his hometown Tokushima and continued to express the landscape of this area in a fresh style. Tomoki Moriyama also studies masterpieces of Japanese art in terms of painting materials and production methods, and reflects these in his own contemporary works. This time, he was born in Okayama Prefecture and is still active there, and we would like to introduce Tokushima's landscape from an outsider's perspective.

When we look at the works, we realize that while many things are changing, there are surprisingly many things that remain the same. Please look for the important things that will never change in your life.