



Paul Jenkins, *Phenomena Nightwood*, 1962. Exhibited at UB Anderson Gallery.

## UB ANDERSON GALLERY

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## Under Each Other's Spell: The Gutai and New York

OPENING RECEPTION APR 10 2010 5 PM - 7 PM

*Under Each Other's Spell* examines the fruitful relationship that developed between the avant-garde Gutai Art Group, which was founded in Osaka, Japan, in 1954, and New York artists in the 1950s and 1960s. Martha Jackson, mother of David Anderson and famous gallerist in New York City, introduced the Gutai to American audiences in a 1958 group exhibition at the Martha Jackson Gallery.

The exhibition draws heavily on material in the Pollock-Krasner House collection, archival material in the Martha Jackson Archives of UB Anderson Gallery, the David Anderson Collection, and a group of paintings in the collection of Paul Jenkins, who was an artist in residence at the Gutai Pinacotheca in Osaka in 1964. The paintings were given to Jenkins in exchange for his own works as an act of friendship. As he recalled the time he and the Gutai artists spent together, Jenkins said that they were "under each other's spell."

The word *gutai* means "concrete." In the group's manifesto, its founder Jiro Yoshihara defined Gutai as truth to the material of which art is made, and lifting that material to spiritual heights. He singled out Jackson Pollock and the French painter Georges Mathieu as artists who "grapple with the material in a way which is completely appropriate to it," and encouraged group members to emulate this approach. Their efforts were publicized in a journal, *Gutai*, of which 14 issues appeared from 1955-65.

The Gutai group was well aware of its distance from the art world's centers and consequently used the postal system extensively to build their international network. These efforts resulted in their publication of some of Ray Johnson's earliest moticos and the inclusion of Gutai in Allan Kaprow's 1966 book *Assemblages, Environments and Happenings*. Yoshihara collected art journals from around the world, and also sent copies of the Gutai journal to artists overseas, including to Jackson Pollock. In 1956, when B.H. Friedman was helping Lee Krasner organize Pollock's affairs, he came across issues two and three of the Gutai journal in Pollock's library. Friedman wrote to the group, requesting a subscription and commenting, "I know these publications of yours must have been loved by Jackson, as they are concerned with the same kind of vision and reality with which he was."

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In addition to paintings by several Gutai members, including Yoshihara, Atsuko Tanaka, Shozo Shimamoto, Sadamasa Motonaga, Kazuo Shiraga and Akira Kanayama, the exhibition includes examples of the Gutai journal and other publications; documentation of the 1958 Gutai exhibition at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, works by New York artists who related strongly to Gutai; rare videos of Gutai exhibitions and performances in Japan; and photographs of American artists—including Jenkins, Alice Baber, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, and John Cage—visiting the Gutai group in 1964.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, with essays on the interaction between Gutai and New York artists by guest curator Ming Tiampo, associate professor of art history at Carleton University in Ottawa, and on Jackson Pollock's relationship to the Gutai group by Tetsuya Oshima, curator of the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art in Japan, as well as a new translation of the Gutai Manifesto by independent scholar Reiko Tomii and a reflection by David Kaplan, a director and Tennessee Williams scholar, on Gutai's influence on Williams' one-act play, *The Day on Which a Man Dies*. T

Organized by the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, the exhibition was on view there from July 30–October 17, 2009. It traveled to the Harold B. Lemmerman Gallery of New Jersey City University from October 22–December 16, 2009. It will be on view at UB Anderson Gallery March 27–August 22, 2010.

