

## The Theatre of Setsu Asakura

By Yasunori Gunji



*Setsu Asakura*

“As a girl, I would sometimes stay up all night painting,” the renowned Japanese scenographer, Setsu Asakura happily recalls. “I would imagine Picasso in that same moment on the other side of the world working on finishing a painting, and there was no way I could possibly sleep.” Born in 1922, in Yanaka, a working-class neighbourhood of Tokyo, Setsu Asakura is the daughter of a famous sculptor, Fumio Asakura, and she began to paint at the age of three. As her father didn’t have much faith in the syllabus being taught in compulsory education at the time, and wanting Setsu to receive a more liberal education, he arranged for her to have private lessons at home with teachers screened by himself. “They came several times a week,” recalls Setsu Asakura, “but I mostly played rather than study, which I didn’t enjoy. But there was never a day when I didn’t paint.” At the age of 17 she did in fact establish herself as a painter in the Japanese art world. However, she was already moving away from the two-dimensionality of painting towards the three dimensions of space, to which the theatre adds the fourth dimension of time. Thus, in 1948, at the age of 35, she worked on her first theatre design project and since then has continued her career as a stage designer and costume designer, ranging from avant-garde theatre to lyric opera, from prose theatre to musicals, from feature films to traditional Japanese Kabuki e Noh theatre.

In 1970, she accepted an invitation from the Rockefeller Foundation to study theatre in New York.

In 1986, she was the recipient of an award from the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs Arts Festival for the best stage design for the theatre production *Nigorie* (directed by Yukio Ninagawa).

In 1990, she also began to work in Europe. As a costume designer and scenographer she has worked very closely with today’s most revered Kabuki performer, Ichikawa Ennosuke III.

In over 50 years of creative activity, Setsu Asakura has collaborated on over 500 productions. During this period, she has continued her work as a painter and illustrator, she has taught at the Kuwazawa Design Institute, and she is artistic director of the prestigious Theatre 1010 in Tokyo. She has also published several books. “Designing for the theatre is like making a very good doughnut: at its centre there is the script, buffered by the director, the scenographer, the cast, the lighting designer, the sound technician, the costume designer, and so on; a collective call to arms of all those professionals that make up the design and technical crew. This constitutes a group effort,” explains Setsu Asakura. “When they ask me what aspect of the work of a scenographer is paramount and what this entails, I reply by saying that, in my opinion, you have to put your heart and intellect into it in equal measure. If your heart and soul are not in it, or if you lack a sense of observation, you cannot create brilliant design. Design that resonates. There is a constant need for intellectual flexibility, to be unfailingly curious of all things new. I shall always strive to be forward-thinking, and not to dwell on the past. I am passionate about the theatrical space, it stimulates me to produce radiant sets that emanate light... Beauty is luminosity. And I know that to realize this dream of splendour, it is essential to feel a deep enthusiasm in addition to having an acute mind.”

“To me, scenography does not seem so very different from painting or sculpture. As in these two disciplines, stage design attempts to encapsulate time and space within two or three dimensions, in the hope of capturing time, in the way that art renders things eternal.

The scenographer’s craft begins from a reading of the text; from there, ideas are formed of the scenic use of space, then pen is put to paper to make these ideas concrete. The project is then developed through meetings with the director and design team. The key issue at this stage is to devote time to thinking on how best communicate the visual language based on the meaning contained in the text. In order to achieve this, the scenographer must thoroughly study every inch of the scenic space. At times, fresh, innovative ideas can spring to the surface, which have little or nothing to do with the contents of the text. But we must not forget that stage design is very much a group activity. The scenographer is required to maintain a certain flexibility;

we have to supervise the technical and dress rehearsals whilst being ever ready to effect changes or adjustments. If the scenic space is modified, for example, or if the same production is staged at a different venue, the stage design undergoes a metamorphosis.

In today's society, where non-reality always outstrips reality, and reality is becoming more dramatic than any theatrical drama piece, there is a need to rethink the theatre space in order to make it more suitable for audiences. Theatre is a place where reality and non-reality interact, and in this respect there is no difference between theatre and cinema.

I believe that I have been strongly influenced by the famous Odessa steps sequence from *The Battleship Potemkin* film, as I am aware that in my work I make frequent use of steps or staircases. I find vertical movement more interesting than horizontal movement. Who knows, maybe it represents an innermost desire to become taller, for a shorty like myself..."

"For every idea that comes to me as I am reading the text, I note them down either as a sketch or in words. One key factor is the choice of materials for the stage design. The materials that we select constitute the basis for creating a communicative and visual framework and in order to make the scenic space spring to life. The choice of materials is dependent on the sensibility of each person, while the space and the objects placed within it also need to be thoroughly worked out. In theatre, the stage props and furniture, such as chairs and wall-mounted paintings, are vitally important, and these are selected by the scenographer. Ideally, for a new theatre production the costumes should also be newly created so as to unify colour with form. And it is crucial for the scenographer to be able to work in conjunction with a lighting designer who is 'on the same page', because whether a stage production works or not, a whole lot depends on the lighting. So, to students who want to become stage designers, I would strongly recommend studying how lighting functions. The power of light is immense."

*The main material used for this scenery is acrylic plastic. The play is set in New York and I wanted to express the clear, hard texture or coldness of that city. One day, I went to a coffee shop in Tokyo and my eyes were caught by ice cubes in a glass of water. "Eureka!", I thought, and chose acrylic plastic, inspired by what I saw. I used the plastic on the floor, removing the actual stage floor, and had lights rigged underneath. But when the set was lit, I found the light from the front simply passed through the clear acrylic. In order to add the sparkle I wanted, I got what is called aurora film and embossed vinyl sheets, crumpled them and covered the acrylic so that the light is reflected and diffused. This play has many scenes. For instance, the characters travel in their imagination to Antarctica and the wild west of the frontier days. In one sequence, even an angel appears. Reality and fantasy mingle with each other and scenes jump from one space in time to another almost dizzyingly. As a consequence, I decided to make the set boldly symbolic, so that the audience will use their imagination and travel to different places with the characters.*

## **Reality Shines Out of Fiction**

### **Ms. Asakura, how do you begin a project when you design for the stage?**

It always starts with what I get when I read the text. For instance, when I read Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, I at once feel that Denmark must have seemed like a prison to this young man, Hamlet, and the image will not go away. So I think, "The most prevalent feature of a prison is enclosure, but is enclosing an area enough to make the space a prison?"

This question leads to another, "What then is a prison?" This kind of questioning leads to a more concrete image and I start to give shape to my own idea of a prison. That stage of work is not easy, but it is this difficulty which makes the whole process interesting.

If you have a great director and talented actors, the audience will see a prison in what Peter Brook <sup>(1)</sup> called "the empty space", the space without any piece of scenery. Ultimately. But that is difficult, too. So we designers mount or fly something. We may even think, "Can I express the prison just with lines?" We are always trying out possibilities this way.

Let's assume there is a play that takes place in a Japanese house. Is it enough to build a set of a naturalistic Japanese house? Whether it is a farmhouse or a large residence, if you study various conventions about the houses of this country, it is not very difficult to design a realistic set. But, depending on the play, I would try to think of some way to express the "soul" of the space in a Japanese building, in a way completely different from being true to life. What is essential for design is your "heart" and "spirit" questing after the most appropriate form.

**When you are designing a foreign play produced here with Japanese actors, you will be completely departing from the concept of the original production abroad, won't you?**

Of course. I read the play and make my design based on my own image of what it needs. Take the play, *W;t* (2002), for example. It is set in a hospital. When I saw it in an off-Broadway theatre in New York, the set was made of two curtains only. For the Japanese production, I combined the duralumin boards commonly known here as "punched metal" and the milk-white vinyl cloth to make the hospital room.

I was looking forward to seeing how the lighting designer, Mr. Yuji Sawada, would light the set. When lights faded in softly from behind the set, the framework became visible like a shadow and the set began to look like a huge shoji screen. It was just as I had imagined it. But what was most striking was that Mr. Sawada's lighting added the element of "time" to my set; it became the hospital room in the morning and the room at night, you know. I am convinced that the choice of duralumin was successful. When something like this happens, what I can only call pleasure wells up in me. I am sure American people's perception of reality led to the design of the American production of *W;t*, but in Japan, though the approach was different, we were also able to convey the reality of the hospital room.



Oguri, produced by Shochiku, written by T. Umehara, directed by E. Ichikawa, lighting by S. Yoshii. Tokyo, 1991

**How do you define this reality you are speaking of?**

It is the feeling of "actuality" which shines through the form of fiction called theatre. I believe the most important element for theatre is whether such reality is present on the stage. I don't think you can achieve reality by merely being naturalistic. Then, does that mean we should turn to abstract expression? No, it is not so easy as that. There can be an extremely abstract play which comes to life in a space that seems cut out of our everyday life. What I am suggesting is the kind of reality the particular production requires determines the necessary forms and materials. I want to express the texture of reality through form, using the magic of stage design.

**Walking with Eyes Wide Open**

**How do you find ideas and images about materials for your design?**

I always have my antenna out wherever I go and whatever I am doing. Even when I take a walk, I keep my eyes wide, wide open (laughter) because I may find something astonishing among the garbage waiting for collection. The other day, I was walking and something glittered. I looked and found an empty sake glass half buried in the rubbish, and a bit of aluminum foil was in the glass, shining. I thought, "This can be used somewhere!" and the idea went into my mind's storage. And I have already used it for a play, in fact.

And one day, I was walking near my house and passed in front of a house being demolished. It sent some signal to my antenna and I went back to my house to get my camera. I took many pictures of the house. I guess other people would just pass by the house barely noticing it or saying, "Ah, demolition site", or something like that. Another thing I found in my neighborhood recently is this two-storied house whose

ground floor is used as a garage. Ivy covered the walls of the top floor, and bits of it hung down and twined around the parked car. "This could be used some day", I thought, and put it into my mind's storage. If I keep stocking images like this, when I read a play, the idea which is just right for it pops out, just as I want it, I don't know why. (Laughter) I suppose young designers today don't work like this. They use computers nowadays, I suppose. But the danger it involves is that the images tend to be flat if you don't use anything else...



*Hamlet*, produced by Sunshine Theatre and Major League, written by W. Shakespeare, directed by Y. Kurita, costumes designed by S. Asakura, lighting by Y. Sawada. Tokyo, 2002



### **My Starting Point Was Avant-Garde Art**

#### **Have you worked like that from the beginning?**

Yes, I have. When I started designing for the stage [her first production was in 1948], both Japan and her theatre were poor. So, when it came to materials, I had to make what I wanted out of whatever was available. Today, young people just go and buy things because you can buy anything.

In the 60s, I worked with a company called "Henshin" <sup>(2)</sup>. Their home was the Yoyogi Shogekijo, a small theatre space, and they were putting on one play a month, which meant that I had to produce ideas every month. Because we had very little money, I got a thorough training in using my brains to come up with ideas. For instance, I used egg cartons to cover the wall, hung umbrella ribs all over the ceiling, papered the wall with cooking foil, and so on. I remember using netting made for golf driving ranges, and bed sheets, too. I

experimented with all sorts of materials. Another thing that played an important part was joining the avant garde movement led by Mr. Sofu Teshigawara <sup>(3)</sup>, head of the Sogetsu School of flower arrangement, in the 60s. In that decade, artists irrespective of genres like painting, flower arrangement, and so on, gathered together, including Mr. Teshigawara's son, Mr. Hiroshi Teshigawara, and stimulated each other to pursue avant-garde expressions. For instance, artists who had nothing to do with the art of flower arrangement displayed flowers at the Sogetsu Hall. I did, too. I remember arranging flowers in a bucket with brooms and dusters and covering the surface of a large earthenware jar with yellow chrysanthemums. What we had was the dynamism of breaking and destroying the conventional. I think that movement deeply affected my spirit afterwards.



*On the Metro*, produced by Human Design based on the novel by J. Asada, written and directed by Worm Hole Project, lighting by T. Kasahara. Le Theatre Ginza, Tokyo 2000

**It sounds like an exciting age. Can you think of anything else which served as a basis for your stage design?**

It's kabuki. It's really deeply rooted in me. Why? Because kabuki often shows incredible leaps of imagination! Do you know a classical play called *Kenuki* (Tweezers)? In it, a huge pair of tweezers actually moves on its own! And in the 'Yoshinogawa (River Yoshino)' scene of the play *Imoseyama Onna Teikin*, when two lovers, Hinadori and Kuganosuke, are forcibly separated and killed, the head of Hinadori flows on the river. But the amazing thing is that her head flows against the river current. It's all wrong! But when you see the scene in the theatre, you don't notice how wrong it is. That is the fascinating feature of kabuki. Without knowing, you are drawn into its world. That kind of expression is special. It has nothing to do with realism, that world.

**When did you start seeing kabuki?**

When I was little. My aunt loved kabuki and used to take me along often. In those days, I accepted those "leaps of imagination" as a matter of fact, very naturally. But when I grew up, began working in theatre and saw kabuki again, I noticed the huge amount of fabrication it contained, and was I shocked! (Laughter) "This is Surrealism!" was my reaction.

**Before starting to work as a stage designer, you were a fully recognized classical Japanese painter. How do you think your "roots" in Japanese painting have influenced your design work?**

This question has been asked so often I've gotten tired of it (laughter), but let's see... Classical Japanese painting does not rely on photographic realism. There is no perspective and it is two-dimensional. But in a sense, it is like a forerunner of abstract painting. Look at classical scrolls. I'm sure you'll notice their great composition. Contrary to the rules of perspective, a distant object may be painted larger than a thing in the foreground. I find that truly interesting. And if you look through a scroll, it depicts a chronological development, you know? It's a kind of art that has assimilated time into it, which is something common with stage design.



*The Tale of Genji*, produced by Nissay Theatre, Tokyo 2001, based on the story by Murasaki Shikibu, composed by Minoru Miki, written and directed by Colin Graham, costumes designed by Setsu Asakura, lighting by Christopher Akerlind

### **Why were you painting in the Japanese style?**

When I was in my teens, I was painting in oil. Look (pointing to a picture in her studio), there is my oil painting over there.

If you want to paint in a realistic style, oil is easier. The pigments you use in Japanese painting are much harder to handle and restrictive. For instance, you have to dissolve each pigment every time you paint. But I felt because of that very inconvenience, it made me approach my own painting more seriously – when I was thirteen or fourteen years old.

### **Really? You were precocious!**

Colors you use in oil painting come in tubes, pre-mixed by somebody else. I felt it was too easy just to squeeze colors out of paint. But because I don't like easy compromises, I choose the hard way. That's my way of life. (Laughter) Think of fresco painting in Europe. Its materials are closer to what we use in the Japanese-style painting. I thought it was the right way to paint, even when I was a young girl, when I knew nothing at all, really.

You must've seen a Rinpa<sup>(4)</sup> painting of an outsized moon right in the centre of the picture. But in real life, there are moments when the moon truly looks like that. It's different from the Western idea of perspective, but I believe it's the Japanese original way of capturing what is "real". When you try to capture what is real, your style does not necessarily fall into what is regarded as true-to-life realism. In painting and in theatre, I think my interest started from that discovery. Think of Chekhov's plays. It may be easier to understand if you describe his world as realistic or naturalistic, but if you are not very critical, you end up falling into the trap of reproducing Russian aristocrats' life in the latter half of the 19th century. And you see that kind of production frequently. But I feel no world is harder to capture with realism than Chekhov's. I want to design Chekhov's plays very much these days. I have a good idea of what I should do visually. But when I start to put that into shape, I may produce something quite different. (Laughter)

### **Was there any reason why your interest gradually extended from painting towards stage design?**

The age we lived in, more than anything, was what was behind it. We humans always move in relation to the times. There is an artist I love more than anybody, called Marcel Duchamp<sup>(5)</sup>. His style underwent constant changes, almost dizzyingly so. And finally he stopped painting altogether. I understood why. When I saw "The Large Glass" of his, I knew he had said goodbye to painting. In his view, painting could not catch up with the pace of the times. I think the stylistic changes in Picasso's painting occurred for the same reason. The age was behind it all. This may sound presumptuous, but the same sort of thing probably happened to me. What I wanted to express could not be contained in painting and ran out into the three-dimensional or four-dimensional world, if you know what I mean...

## **I Want to Break Down People's Preconception of the Theatre**

### **When you are designing, is there any big factor that helps you, beside the ideas stemming from materials?**

More than anything else, the thought about how to use the specific theatre space. For instance, I designed *Yabuhara the Blind Master* in 1973 and the whole design started from the material, a rope. In this play by Mr. Hisashi Inoue, there is a line that goes, "A blind man lives by the rope", and I immediately thought, "Let's use ropes!" And the other big influence on the design was that the first production was shown in the Parco Theatre. The auditorium of that theatre is sloped in the way that the audience looks down on the stage; so I wanted to use the entire stage floor. I came up with ropes stretched across the stage, drawing lines and symbolizing the lives of those people. As you can see, what theatre the production goes in is tremendously important, because how the audience looks at the stage affects the design concept altogether.

### **What kind of theatre do you like?**

A theatre without the proscenium arch. Whatever you do, the proscenium arch separates the audience from the stage. I want to break down the border between the two but it is very hard if there is the arch.

What to do about the proscenium arch depends on the stage designer's brains. For example, with the recent production of *W;t*, I made the opening of the stage narrower than the arch so that the audience would feel the height more. A Japanese stage is wider than it is high because of the influence of a kabuki theatre. Today, many foreign plays are produced in this country, and I think a stage space with height is more desirable.

A lot of people cling to the existing theatre forms as a norm, but to me, it is nothing but an *idée fixe*. In my opinion, a villain called the proscenium is always messing up a production. (Laughter)

## **With the Director's Mind, the Lighting Designer's Eye and the Painter's Head**

### **Listening to your answers, I get the impression you are working beyond the confines of a stage designer's role, with the thoughts and ideas of a director and the lighting designer's eye.**

That's right; so, although this may sound a bit big-headed, when I work with the director whose ideas fit mine, the production is likely to succeed. It's the same with lighting designers. With those whose aesthetic sense is similar to mine, or whose sensitivity to light is like mine, the work produced tends to be good.

In today's theatre, lighting greatly influences the stage design. In the old days you couldn't control lighting delicately, but now, you can almost say that lights are the most important tool of expression in the contemporary theatre. What image the scenery creates is related to time, naturally.

The morning, evening, etc. So unless the lighting designer can read the play and expresses what it says with his lighting, you can't have meaningful collaboration with him. Unless a stage designer has some knowledge of lighting, like how the choice of lighting gels affects the color of the set, it's impossible to design well. A color that looks subdued in the work light, before the lights are rigged, may turn astonishingly bright when it is lit, and a designer must be able to calculate the effect beforehand. When I design costumes, I pay even more attention to that calculation.

### **What do you think is most important for stage design?**

As I said a while ago, it is "the heart and spirit" in approaching this art form called theatre. Without them, you cannot create a production that really shines out. However many productions you design, your efforts will be in vain. First at all, you need the heart that nurtures the image you get from reading the text. Nurturing, however, also needs a rather cold, objective point of view. I don't think stage design can grow without such a point of view. I always say that a stage designer must be able to draw because that skill is the basis of our work. Unless you can express the image that is in your mind through a picture, how can you communicate your plan to the director? If you can't, I'm sure it is worrying.

### **Does that mean drawing by hand? What about using the computer?**

I think drawing by hand and drawing with the computer are two entirely different things. The computer probably works fine as a tool but drawing and painting by hand is more creative and more versatile. It is a kind of magic that brings out things you didn't even dream of. The crucial thing about a picture is whether it has power, whether it is full of energy. I am convinced that stage designers and painters must have a flexible mind. I would say the internal power to develop your image into a picture is most important; details can follow later.

**If you were to choose any other ability necessary for a stage designer, what would it be?**

The ability to break down your preconceptions. These days, we are surrounded by things. In choosing a material for a production, for instance, too often designers just go and buy something and think it's enough. They trust materials too much. When you hear the words "silver foil" and if you can think only of flat, thin foil, it's no good. Try crumpling the foil into a ball, squash the ball or spread the foil again and place it on your desk. Then it may not look like mere aluminum foil. Then, imagine what it would look like when different lights are shone on it. You begin to see it in a different way yet again. When I designed *Angels in America* (the first Japanese production in 1994), I used board, and I tried breaking it, putting the broken pieces together and doing all sorts of things all by myself. Relying on my eyes and hands. "Diamonds in ashes", you know. You need the eye to find precious treasures buried in rubbish. You have to have that kind of eye...

**Designing Is Racking Your Spirit**

**Do you have any feelings about young stage designers working today?**

Well, that they are surrounded by material abundance, more than anything else. But if they think fiddling with a computer produces stage design, they are wrong. The world isn't like that. I believe that people who create should have a silly side. Long, long ago, when I was 15 or 16 years old, I would think, "When I am lying in bed like this, on the other side of the earth, Picasso is painting," and I couldn't sleep. I used to get out of bed and paint all night. A silly idea, isn't it? (Laughter) But I don't see this kind of silliness among young designers today. They don't have the sense of crisis. All work is sustained by the sense of crisis, I think, any kind of work. It is true of stage design, too. You have to rack your brains and soul, as it were, to reach a height. The "spirit" I keep mentioning is just that. You might think I'm free and easy when I design but it is not true. Also, I use unusual materials like duralumin, acrylic and various fabrics, but I don't want to impose them on every production. It's not the same as sticking to your own principle.

**You have been using fabric and acrylic repeatedly on a number of productions, haven't you?**

Well, they are chosen only when they suit the content of the play, but I can't help using my favorite materials a number of times. When I use something for the first time, it isn't easy because it involves calculating its weight and other considerations. And each time I use a material, I study and experiment it. Even with fabric, technical progress develops one new material after another and that leads to new ideas. In any case, the play text and the director's ideas are always the basis of any stage design: they switch design ideas on, as it were.

**How do you think theatre will change in the years to come?**

I would like to know that answer myself. (Laughter) One thing I can say is that theatre has continued to exist all these centuries since ancient Greece, and so it will not suddenly change itself unrecognizably. In any period of history, human beings lived their lives, being born into this world and dying. To mankind, theatre must have been necessary whatever form it may take. Methods of expression may change but the essence will remain the same, I believe. In the 20th century, people wished for a happy and affluent future but were never free of warfare. We witness all sorts of lives daily. Theatre mirrors those lives and is full of unfathomable fascination for us, including even the unrefined and squalid elements. I really love theatre because of that.

**First of all, what is the theatre production you like best?**

Bergman's(6) *Hamlet*, and also his *Miss Julie* and *Madame de Sade*, these three.

**And among the actors you've seen, who do you like best?**

Judi Dench(7). She used to belong to the Royal Shakespeare Company. When she came to Japan for the first time, about 30 years ago, I saw her in *Twelfth Night*. Oh, she was beautiful! She must be about 70 now, but some years ago I saw her in *A Little Night Music* in London. She was great! She is also a good singer. And dances well, too. Of course, she is marvelous in straight plays.



**Among the stage designers whose works you have seen, who is your favorite?**

It's difficult to choose among stage designers. It's not because I am one, but because I may like what he or she did in one production but not so much in another, you know. If I just go by what I like, works by John Napier, who designed *Les Misérables*, and by another Briton, Bob Crowley, left strong impressions on my mind.

**Of the productions you designed yourself, which one do you like?**

*Mystery of the Rose Bouquet*, I guess. One of the reasons is that if the play is good, I really put myself into the project, and this one I like very much.

**Any favorite films?**

There are so many I like and the list will be endless. Just to go by my taste, Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*, Angelopoulos's(8) *The Travelling Players* and *Eternity of a Day*. Angelopoulos paints the background, trees and the like, all gray. So the screen image has no perspective and I like the flat look of it. I like Visconti's(9) *Death in Venice*, too. He cut time into pieces, and the past and the present are placed side by side on the same chronological axis. I like his world where the distinction between reality and fantasy becomes blurred, intertwining with each other. There was a scene in which a photographic camera is placed in the foreground without any meaning at all, which was just great. And Bunuel's(10) *Un chien Andalou* for its surrealistic images.

**Regarding yourself, what has remained unchanged since your childhood?**

Drawing, for sure. As far as I can remember, there was no day when I didn't draw or paint. When my father (sculptor, Fumio Asakura) died, I was by his bedside, sketching his face.

**What is the one thing you cannot stand?**

Arrogance. It's something I am always cautioning myself against. When one becomes arrogant, one stops making progress there and then.

**Do you have any dream for your future?**

Above anything else, I want to create works that shine!

*(Interviewed in her studio in Shibuya, Tokyo, in October 2002).*

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**Notes**

**1. Peter Brook**

*Director. Born in England in 1925. Leads the International Centre for Theatre Research and is based in Paris. Renowned globally for The Tragedy of Hamlet and A Midsummer Night's Dream among many productions.*

**2. Theatre Company "Henshin"**

*Organized by Toshiharu Takeuchi and his friends in 1965 and produced many plays translated from foreign languages. It became the pioneer of the small theatre movement of the 1960s.*

**3. Sofu Teshigawara**

*1900-1971. Founder of the Sogetsu School of flower arrangement. He promoted active exchanges between flower arrangement and other artistic genres, becoming one of the leaders of avant-garde art in post-war Japan.*

**4. Rinpa**

*A school of painting in the Edo period, creating a new kind of decorative art integrating painting and design. Leading painters include Sotatsu Tawaraya of the early Edo period and Korin Ogata of the Genroku era.*

**5. Marcel Duchamp**

*1887-1968. Painter. Born in France. He moved to the United States and became the central figure of New York Dadaism. In his later life, he abandoned painting and created "ready-made" objets d'art.*

**6. Ingmar Bergman**

*1918-2007. Film and stage director. Born in Sweden. Renowned for such films as Cries and Whispers and*

Through a Glass Darkly. In 1990, his production of *Madame de Sade* was shown in Tokyo.

**7. Judi Dench**

Actress. Born in England in 1934. Received the Academy Award® for Best Supporting Actress in 1999 for playing *Queen Elizabeth I* in the film *Shakespeare in Love*.

**8. Theo Angelopoulos**

Film director. Born in Greece in 1936. Famous for such works as *The Travelling Players*, *Te meteorio vima tou pelargou* and *Eternity of a Day*.

**9. Luchino Visconti**

1906-1976. Film director. Born in Italy. Representative works include *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, *The Damned* and *Ludwig*.

**10. Luis Bunuel**

1900-1983. Film director. Born in Spain. Representative works include *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *Belle de jour* and *Un chien Andalou*.

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