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| Okamoto, Tarō (1911-1996) |
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| Tarō Okamoto [岡本太郎] (1911-1996) was one of Japan’s most visible artists during the post-WWII period. He was born in Kawasaki, Kanagawa, and his father was a cartoonist and his mother a writer. In 1929, having enrolled at the Tokyo Fine Arts School, he travelled to Europe and in 1930 began living in Paris. A member of the Abstraction-Création group between 1933-1937, Okamoto associated with the likes of Georges Bataille, André Breton, Pablo Picasso, and Man Ray before returning to Japan in 1940. Working in many media and courting abstraction, biomorphic surrealism, and an abstracted figuration, his political-allegorical paintings are seemingly emblematic of the post-war decades; examples include the paintings *Heavy Industry* (1949), which is an indictment of capitalism, and *Law of the Jungle* (1950). In 1954, he exhibited in the 27th Venice Biennale, also establishing the Institute of Esthetic Research. The 1960s saw him working in Mexico on a large-scale commission, the nuclear-themed *Myth of Tomorrow* (1970) mural, which was subsequently returned and installed in Tokyo’s Shibuya Station in 2008. Okamoto’s sculptural output included the work *Tower of the Sun* for Osaka’s World Expo ’70, for which he was also artistic director. The Taro Okamoto Memorial Museum in Tokyo, which opened in 1988, occupies his former Aoyama home and studio site, while The Taro Okamoto Museum of Art, opened in 1999 in Kawasaki, holds an extensive collection of his work. |
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| Further reading:  (Harada)  (MoMA)  (Otani and Murata)  (Taro Okamoto Museum of Art, Kawasaki)  (The Taro Okamoto Memorial Museum)  (Tower of the Sun) |