**Hijikata Tatsumi (b. 9 March, 1928, Yoneyama Kunio in Akita Prefecture, Japan; d. 21 January, 1986 in Tokyo, Japan)**

**Summary**

Hijikata Tatsumi is considered to be the founder of *butoh*, though titles such as instigator or ringmaster may be more appropriate. Hijikata’s premiered his first choreography in 1959, an adaptation of Mishima Yukio’s 1952 homoerotic novel *Kinjiki* (*Forbidden Colours*). Reaction to then shocking depiction of sodomy led Hijikata and a number of his colleagues to break from the All Japan Art Dance Association in what would seem to be a classic break of the postmoderns from the moderns. However, as Hijikata’s work developed from a series of happening-like ‘Dance Experiences’ in the 1960s into carefully choreographed group works in the 1970s and 1980s, his dances exhibited hallmarks of Japanese surrealism (pre-war and post-war), the second Japanese avant-garde, and modernism, often all at once. His work fragmented meaning—initially across writing, visual arts, and performing bodies, and later across different parts of his dancers’ bodies—and then layered the fragments one on top of another. Hijikata choreographed for individuals (e.g. Ashikawa Yoko, Kobayashi Saga, Tanaka Min) and groups (Ankoku buyō-ha, Hangi daitō kan, Genjûsha, and Hakutōbō), as well as directed dances for Ohno Kazuo. Hijikata also engaged seriously in writing as an artistic practice – not to explicate or supplement his dances, but as a parallel endeavour. His surrealist texts and scrapbooks are now considered to be part of his artistic achievements.

**Training**

Hijikata studied modern dance in his home province of Akita with Masumura Katsuko, a student of Japanese modern dance pioneer, Eguchi Takaya. Upon settling in Tokyo in 1952, Hijikata studied at the ballet, jazz, and modern dance studio of Andō Mistuko, where he became acquainted with Ohno Kazuo, and the two performed together in Andō’s dances while producing their own works. As a result of the uproar caused by *Forbidden Colours* and a budding friendship with author Mishima (whose text Hijikata had used without permission), Hijikata entered into an active artistic and social exchange with other avant-garde, surrealist and Neo-Dada artists. Asbestos Hall, the home/studio he shared with his wife and fellow dancer, Motofuji Akiko, became a (failed) social club, performance venue, and a place where people—aspiring performers, disenchanted students and protestors—could live, provided they were willing to dance in Hijikata’s regular cabaret productions, the source of funding for all of his projects.

**Contributions to Modernism**

The 1968 performance *Hijikata Tatsumi and Japanese People: Rebellion of the Body* was a turning point for butoh, after which Hijikata transitioned from staging avant-garde experiments into creating works that evoke, deconstruct, and reassemble Japanese archetypes. In this and other practices, he blurred the boundaries between modernism and postmodernism. At the same time his project calls to mind the intersections between nationalism and modernism, it was at odds with the then prevalent Japanese ideal of the modern, efficient subject. Rather than the industrial city, Hijikata found inspiration in the rural far north of his childhood with its mischievous mythological demons and farmers bent and bowed by years of labour. By embodying people and places marginalized by the state, he refigured Japanese identity as multiple. He combined these figures with images from visual art and his own writing to devise new dance vocabularies. These movements were then dispersed across various parts of the dancers’ bodies and further fragmented by the application of different image-stimuli (such as bugs, electricity, mud, cement). The resultant choreography shares surrealism and collage in common with aspects of both modernism and postmodernism.

Ashikawa was Hijikata’s muse and star performer who worked closely with him to develop this new style, epitomized in 1972’s *Hōsōtan* (*Story of Smallpox*)which featured an ensemble of women dancers including Ashikawa and Kobayashi wearing traditional Japanese kimono and *geta*, yet performing incongruous actions, such as tottering about the stage with one sandal in hand and one on a foot, reclining with legs open to the audience, and trembling uncontrollably.

If modernism is typically found in the separation of high art from low art, then Hijikata’s work challenges this separation. Although it is well known that Hijikata earned a living and funded his performances by regularly sending students and dancers out to do cabaret performances in sex clubs and underground theatres, these shows are typically considered separately from his concert dances, as commercial endeavours rather than artistic productions. However, the cabarets increasingly became a training ground for Hijikata’s dancers, and movement vocabularies and techniques began to blur between the nightly popular culture shows and the periodic experimental staged performances.

**Legacy**

At the same time that Hijikata was developing his new techniques, many of his initial collaborators including Yamada Bishop, Kasai Akira, Maro Akaji, and Tamano Koichi and Hiroko set off on their own, expanding butoh beyond its singular central figures, Hijikata and Ohno, and playing a key role in spreading and perpetuating the form. In particular, Maro Akaji’s ‘one dancer, one company’ philosophy has contributed to keeping butoh vital and contemporary by mentoring his Dairakudakan dancers to become choreographers themselves. On the other hand, Waguri Yukio, one of Hijikata’s dancers, produced a *Butoh-Kaden* CD-ROM in 1998 that documents Hijikata’s *butoh-fu*, or choreographic methodology, by matching Waguri’s rehearsal notes of the language Hijikata used to direct their movement with examples of movement sequences. This combination of instincts among Hijikata’s collaborators—to constantly innovate on the one hand and on the other to document and fix a technique—shows that butoh’s avant-garde, modern, and postmodern tendencies continue to coexist even as the globalization of the form proceeds unabated.

**Rosemary Candelario**

**List of Choreographic Works**

1959 *Kinjiki* (*Forbidden Colours*)

*Banzai onna* (*Banzai Woman*)

1960 *Hanatachi* (*Flowers*)

*Shushi* (*Seeds*)

*Divinu shō* (*Divine*) - solo for Kazuo Ohno [need i macron]

*Shorijō* (*Disposal Place*)

*Sei kōshaku* (*Saint Marquis*)

1961 *Han'in han'yōsha no hiru sagari no higi sanshō* (*Secret Ceremony of a Hermaphrodite in*

*the Early Afternoon, Three Chapters*)

1962 *Leda santai* (*Three Phases of Leda*)

1963 *Anma: aiyoku o sasaeru gekijō no hanashi* (*Masseur: A Story That Supports Passion*)

1965 *Barairu dansu: A LA MAISON DE M. CIVEÇAWA* (*Rose-Colored*

*Dance: To Mr. Shibusawa's House*)

1966 *Seiai onchōgaku shinan zue: Tomato* (*Instructional Illustrations for the Study of Divine favor in Sexual Love: Tomato*)

1967 *Keijijō-gaku* (*Emotion in Metaphysics*)

*Butoh June* (*Butoh Genet*)

1968 *Hamayome (Neko)* (*Bride [Cat]*)

*Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin: Nikutai no hanran* (*Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Rebellion of the Body*)

1970 *Oshi no tane* (*Seed of a Mute*)

*Gibasan* (*Seaweed Granny*)

1971 *Bai rabu* (*Selling Love*)

*Susamedama* (*Dissolute Jewel*)

1972 *Zannen ki* (*Note of Regret*)

*Nagasu kujira* (*Fin Whale*)

*Shiki no tame no nijushichiban* (*Twenty-seven Nights for Four Seasons*), which included *Hōsōtan* (*Story of Smallpox*), *Gaishi-kō* (*Thoughts of an Insulator*), *Nadare-ame* (*Avalanche Candy*), and the earlier *Gibasan* and *Susamedama*

1973 *Shizukana ie zenpen, kōhen* (*Quiet House*, first and second half)

1974 *Hakutō zu* (*Drawing of White Peach*)

*Bijin to byōki* (*The Beauty and the Disease*)

*Nichigetsu bōru* (*Sun Moon Ball*)

*Ankoku butoh ebisuya ochō* (*The Utter Darkness Butoh Ochō at the House of Ebisu*)

*Sairen sake* (*Siren Salmon*)

1975 *Rapusodei in “Futashinaya”* (*Rhapsody in “Futashinaya”*)

*Bakke sensei no koibito* (*Lover of Mr. Bakke*)

*Kanojora o okosu koto nakare* (*Shall Not Wake the Women Up*)

*Kohigasa* (*Small Parasol*)

1976 *Uso tsuku mōmuku no shōji* (*A Blind Girl Who Lies*)

*Ankokuban Kaguya hime* (*The Utter Darkness Version of Princess Kaguya*)

1977 *Ritō* (*Pear Head*)

*Sore wa kono yōna yoru datta* (*It Was a Night Like This*)

*Hitogata* (*Human Mold*)

*Shōmen no ishō—shōnen to shōjo no tame no yami no tehon* (*Costume in Front : A Model of Darkness for Boys and Girls*)

*Geisen jō no okugata* (*Lady on the Whale String*)

1978 *Yami no maihime jûnitai : rûburukyû no tame no jûyonban* (*12 Phases of a Dancing Girl*

*of Darkness : Fortnight for the Louvre Palace*)

1983 *Nippon no chibusa* (*Breasts of Japan*)

1984 *Taka zashiki* (*Hawk Parlor*)

*Ren’ai butoh ha teiso kōen* (*Performance for the Establishment of the Love Butoh*

*School*)

1985 *Tōhoku kabuki keikaku 1* (*Tōhoku Kabuki Project 1*)

*Shitashimi e no oku no te* (*The Last Card to the Familiarity*)

*Tōhoku kabuki keikaku 2* (*Tōhoku Kabuki Project 2*)

*Aburamen no Daria* (*Dahlia of Aburamen*)

*Tōhoku kabuki keikaku 3* (*Tōhoku Kabuki Project 3*)

*Tōhoku kabuki keikaku 4* (*Tōhoku Kabuki Project 4*)

**References and Further Reading**

Baird, B. 2012. *Hijikata Tatsumi and Butoh: Dancing in a Pool of Grey Grits*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fraleigh, S. and Nakamura T. 2006. *Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo*. New York: Routledge.

Hosoe E. 2009. *Kamaitachi*, trade edition. New York: Aperture Foundation.

Kurihara N., ed. 2000. Hijikata Tatsumi: The Words of Butoh. Special issue, *The Drama Review* 44(1): 10-81.

Sas, M. 2003. ‘Hands, Lines, Acts: Butoh and Surrealism’. *Qui Parle*, 13(2): 19-51.

Paratextual Materials

Hijikata Tatsumi Archive website <http://www.art-c.keio.ac.jp/en/archives/hijikata-tatsumi.html>

Interview with Morishita Takashi, head of Hijikata Archive at Keio University, images: http://performingarts.jp/E/art\_interview/1008/1.html

Possible photos:

An image from Hosoe Eikoh’s *Kamaitachi* (I have heard that he is generous with giving photos for academic use, e.g. dissertations, so perhaps he’d be willing in this case)

For example: <http://robinlam.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/ehosoe1.jpg>

OR <http://theredlist.fr/media/database/photography/history/anatomy/eikoh-hosoe/001_eikoh-hosoe_theredlist.jpg>