**Kitawaki, Noboru (北脇昇展)**

(4 June 1901, Nagoya – 18 December 1951, Kyoto)

Noboru Kitawaki was among the most inventive artists linked to inter-war Surrealism in Japan, and an acquaintance of its keenest apologist, Shūzō Takiguchi. He trained in Kyoto under Seifū Tsuda, and first showed work with the Nika Society, before promoting avant-gardism through initiatives like the Art and Culture Society, founded in 1939. A number of pictures from the end of the 1930s evidence his turn away from Academic Realism toward Surrealism, and a melancholic withdrawal from an increasingly nationalistic and militarized culture into the life of the mind. *Perishing in the Sky* (1937) is one of many pictures with objects suspended in mental landscapes. Here, the flitting seeds of maple leaves, cloud formations, and a sinister shadow are cast against a dark blue ground. Around this time, he experimented with automatism, collage and decalcomania, and in 1941 completed his better known series of diagrammatic paintings called *Analysis of Chinese Divination of the Chou Period*. These used geometric shapes, tables and symbols on blank grounds, for the purpose of working through ideas from the I Ching, Zen, Kantian philosophy, mathematics, and the life sciences, which he was also exploring in a number of theoretical essays.

**Further Reading:**

[Matsumoto](http://www.google.co.uk/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Tohru+Matsumoto%22&source=gbs_metadata_r&cad=2), T., and [Otani](http://www.google.co.uk/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Shogo+Otani%22&source=gbs_metadata_r&cad=2), S., eds. (1997) *Noboru Kitawaki: A Retrospective*, [National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo](http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?an=National+Museum+of+Modern+Art%2C+Tokyo&cm_sp=det-_-bdp-_-author).

Nakamura, G. (1968) *Japanese avant-garde painting: resistance and collapse: the case of K*, Tokyo.