**Yoshihara, Jiro** (吉原治良)

**(Osaka, 1 January 1905 – Ashiya, 10 February 1972)**

Jiro Yoshihara was the founder – with Shozo Shimamoto and a younger generation of students – of the Gutai Art Association (1954-72). He organized the Association’s events, such as *Outdoor Exhibition to Challenge the Midsummer Sun* in1955, and promoted it with a manifesto of 1956, and then a journal. He first showed with the Nika Society, but after the Second World War rejected its orientation toward salon painting, and turned to a bolder, gestural abstraction, which accommodated his interest in calligraphy. His oils on canvas from the 1950s, such as *White Painting*, shown at New York’s Martha Jackson Gallery in 1958, exemplify the exchanges taking place at this time between the Japanese, proponents of Tachisme (Art Informel) and Abstract Expressionism. Under the leadership of Yoshihara, Gutai (which means *concrete embodiment*) picked up on the performative nature of these tendencies, taking a multi-media approach that encompassed happenings, installation, and new media, whilst making use of everyday materials and eliciting audience participation. With the exception of interactive works like *Room* and *Please Draw Freely*, which were both shown at the second outdoor Gutai exhibition of 1956, Yoshihara was chiefly a painter, remembered today for his Zen-inspired minimalist rectangular and circular forms on black, red or white grounds, to which he devoted himself through the 1960s.

**Further Reading**

Munroe, A. (1994) *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, New York: Harry N. Abrams.

Tiampo, M. (2010) [*Gutai: Decentering Modernism*](http://www.worldcat.org/title/gutai-decentering-modernism/oclc/587209581&referer=brief_results), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.