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| Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-77) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-77) was multi-talented, painting, writing novels and plays, and directing and producing theatre. His mother was a pacifist and a Christian, and Murayama himself converted to Christianity in reaction to being assaulted for expressing his own pacifist views. After a short stint studying philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University, he left for Berlin to study art and drama. Murayama encountered the European avant-garde, but was first drawn to Wassily Kandinsky’s constructivism. Constructivism’s detachment from reality disturbed Murayama, and upon returning to Japan he collaborated with artist, dramatist, and designer Yanase Masamu (1900-45) to create the MAVO art movement. MAVO drew on Dada to create what might be labeled performance art today.  Murayama was drawn to the proletarian theatre movement, and applied avant-garde aesthetic principles to theatrical creations. Beginning in 1930 he was arrested multiple time under the Peace Preservation Law. Although he recanted his communist views in 1934, he continued to work with socialist theatre companies. In 1940 he was arrested along with the other leaders of the New Cooperative Troupe. After WWII Murayama helped re-establish the New Cooperative Troupe, but political disagreements within the troupe led to its dissolution. In February 1959 he helped re-organize it into the Tokyo Art Theatre Troupe. |
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