

= Kikuuiki =

Kikuuiki (English : Mixing Airspace ; stylized as kikUUiki , Japanese pronunciation : [kik? : iki]) is the fourth studio album by Japanese band Sakanaction . It was released on March 17 , 2010 , through Victor Entertainment . In January , the album was preceded by the single " Aruku Around " , which was met with the greatest commercial success for the band since their debut , reaching number three on Oricon 's singles chart . The album was nominated as one of the finalists for the CD Shop Awards , and was lauded by critics for its cohesive sound and literary lyrics . At the time of release , it was their most commercially successful release since their debut , reaching number three in Japan .

Sakanaction spent most of 2009 experimenting on the album 's single " Aruku Around " , followed by two months of recording in January and February 2010 . Most of the final recording stages were spent on the song " Me ga Aku Aiirro " , a seven @-@ minute rock opera used as a promotional single during its release . The album saw a new recording approach for the band , where the members worked more spontaneously and synchronized . The album was influenced by the commercial success of " Aruku Around " , and was written as a response to the song .

= = Background and development = =

After recording two studio albums in Sapporo , the band moved to Tokyo in spring 2009 to further their musical potential . Their first album produced in Tokyo , Shin @-@ shiro (2009) , saw a new approach for the band , where vocalist Ichiro Yamaguchi asked the other members of Sakanaction to arrange songs individually , instead of together . Led by the singles " Sen to Rei " and " Native Dancer " , the album became their most commercially successful in their career , peaking at number eight on Oricon 's album chart . Despite this , Yamaguchi was disappointed with the sales , and was not sure why the album stalled at 30 @,@ 000 copies sold .

After the release of the album in January 2009 , Sakanaction performed a two @-@ month tour of Japan , Sakanaquarium 2009 : Shinshiro . This was followed by appearances at many summer music festivals , including Sweet Love Shower , Nano @-@ Mugen Fes , Rock in Japan and Rising Sun Rock Festival . On June 13 , 2009 , Sakanaction performed at Version 21 @.@ 1 , a newly created rock event by Sakanaction and the rock bands Ogre You Asshole and the Telephones to showcase rock music of the 2010s . On October 10 , Sakanaction performed their first overseas concert , the Gentra X Ssamzie Sound Festival in Paju , South Korea .

Yamaguchi had started collecting ideas for Kikuuiki in February 2009 , less than a month after the release of Shin @-@ shiro . The band spent most of 2009 experimenting on the song " Aruku Around " , and performed the song at their summer festival appearances at Rock in Japan and Rising Sun Rock Festival , to see how the audience would react to the song 's different approach . After " Aruku Around " was released as a single in January 2010 , it became a commercial and critical success . It reached number three on Oricon 's single charts , and was praised for its strong arrangement and Yamaguchi 's poetic lyrics . The single 's success surprised the band , who never considered it could become as popular as it did .

= = Writing and production = =

The album was primarily recorded at Freedom Studio in Shinjuku , Tokyo , with secondary recording sessions held at Sound Arts , Avaco Creative Studio and Galva Studio , all in Tokyo , as well as Studio Wakefield in Tama @-@ ku , Kawasaki . Recording sessions for " Aruku Around " were held in 2009 , while the bulk of the album was recorded in January and February 2010 . The recording sessions finished on February 16 , a month before the album 's release date . The writing process took longer than expected and the band had to postpone the album four times from their intended finishing date , mostly due to the complexities of recording the seven minute long song " Me ga Aku Aiirro " .

The Kikuuiki album sessions were influenced by the commercial success of " Aruku Around " ,

where the band considered what sorts of songs they wanted to make , and what sort of music they should present to their new audience for the audience to understand what songs Sakanaction create other than " Aruku Around " -style ones . The band did not want to make an album full of songs identical to " Aruku Around " , and instead wanted to express to their listeners the breadth of musical inspirations that they could mix together . Yamaguchi felt that it was important to not release a second similar song immediately after " Aruku Around " , as he saw that music consumers in the 2010s were acting as critics on their own Mixi or Twitter accounts . For these people , he believed it was important to exhibit different aspects of the band . He felt this was important for growing Sakanaction as a band , to break the cycle of a musical act becoming popular , then continuing to release the same style of music that made them popular until people grew tired of them . Even before the single 's success , the band planned to feature songs on the album that would go against listeners expectations of what Sakanaction was as a band . On the other hand , the band attempted to keep a commercial sound , the same goal of Shin @-@ shiro , or else they felt that their efforts would have been wasted . This led the band trying to create pop art music , blending art with commercialism .

The creation process for Kikuuiki was different to that of Shin @-@ shiro , where each member worked alongside Yamaguchi in a two @-@ person meeting , and later working on the songs together as a band . For Kikuuiki , Yamaguchi recorded each song 's demo , then in a meeting the band would discuss the song 's feel and emotions , listing everything on a white board . Yamaguchi would then leave the other four band members to work on the song together , while he worked on their next song . Afterwards , he would return to the studio and make suggestions on their progress on the first song . This meant that Yamaguchi had less input on Kikuuiki than on the band 's previous albums , which made him feel more like the band 's producer . The lessened input made Yamaguchi feel that he had come to trust each member 's musical abilities much more than before . On previous albums , the members needed to compromise or give up on ideas that they had , however on Kikuuiki they found that they understood each other much better . This led to the members expressing themselves more , such as drummer Keiichi Ejima , who showcased his taste in rock music strongly in the sound he created for the album . Many songs were still being created when they were recording , unlike previous albums where songs were entirely finished before recording the final take . This meant that many spontaneous ideas were included on the album . An example of this was the band wanted to add a chorus , they collected together all the people who happened to be in the studio at the time , including their musical director . The spontaneous process led to the song " Klee " , written about the paintings of Swiss @-@ German painter Paul Klee , to be recorded in a single take . Similarly , the song " Coelacanth to Boku " was inspired by the atmosphere of Yamaguchi 's room as the album was being created . Instead of featuring repeating sounds on the album , Sakanaction decided to carefully consider how each sound @-@ effect effected the song , and included very few repeating sounds .

The album 's title Kikuuiki (??? , Kik?iki) is a word coined by Yamaguchi . It is related to the term kisui 'iki (???) , a term describing the brackish water around river heads , where fresh water and salt water mix together . Yamaguchi replaced the character referring to water with the character referring to sky , applying the concept to mixing air instead . This phrase is used to represent the album 's theme : mixing the unmixable . This idea related to how each member had completely different music tastes , but somehow were able to create music together . Similarly , it related to the idea of how Sakanaction as a band mixed rock , club and folk music , but were able to blend different tastes to find an equilibrium that a wide range of people would like . The band created the song " Me ga Aku Aiuro " as a song that would represent the album 's theme in a single song . The album 's introduction , a mix of recordings taken by Yamaguchi on his iPhone at the recording studio , was similarly created to match this theme .

The album was influenced by the changing mediums people listen to music in the 2000s and 2010s : how people used their cellphones or YouTube to discover new music . Yamaguchi wanted to create songs that were difficult to evaluate by listening to just a sample of the song . The seven minute long " Me ga Aku Aiuro " in particular was written with such music consumers in mind . The band also felt influenced by the city of Tokyo , after living in the city for a year and a half and

deciding to call it their permanent home . Retrospectively , Yamaguchi saw Shin @-@ shiro as depicting the band as they had arrived in Tokyo , while Kikuuiki showed the versions of themselves that they had discovered by living in Tokyo .

After recording Shin @-@ shiro , the band had many opportunities to meet other bands that performed similar music to them , because they were now based in Tokyo . In particular , Yamaguchi felt influenced by Y?suke Koide of Base Ball Bear , impressed that Koide 's lyrics managed to express himself as himself , despite their fictional nature . Yamaguchi wrote his first fiction song because of this , " Omotesand? Nij?roku @-@ ji " , as a challenge for himself , and to match the mixing theme of Kikuuiki . Yamaguchi took further inspiration from the Sh?wa period in Japan during its asset price bubble when writing " Omotesand? Nij?roku @-@ ji " . The song " Ushio " was one of the first compositions written for the album . Yamaguchi decided to place it as the first song on the album , as he felt it was similar to the material found on Shin @-@ shiro , as a way to show off what sort of band Sakanaction were up until the release of " Aruku Around " . The song mixed a heavy lyrical theme of whether personal philosophies arise from a person 's community or from within themselves , with a psychedelic , avant garde pop sound .

Yamaguchi found the Kikuuiki recording sessions exhausting , as if he had used all of his energy in the writing process . In an interview with Rockin ' On Japan in 2011 , Yamaguchi felt that the people who became fans during this period became Sakaction 's core fanbase . Because of this , many of Sakanaction 's concert set @-@ lists continue to feature songs from Kikuuiki for these people .

= = Cover artwork = =

The album 's artwork was created by Kamikene and Daisuke Ishizaka of Hatos . It features two overlapping circles colored deep blue and bright blue , in order to create aiiro (??) , a color close to indigo . The bright blue was chosen as it was a synthetic ink that regularly occurs in Japanese printing , while the deep blue was taken naturally , isolating a color taken from a photo of the sky just before dawn . The center of the artwork features the Kikuuiki typography , as well as a logo of two overlapping circles . The mix of natural and artificial blue circles was used to represent Kikuuiki 's theme of mixing points .

= = Promotion and release = =

Kikuuiki 's release was announced in mid @-@ January 2010 , after the release of the single " Aruku Around " . On March 10 , the song " Me ga Aku Aiiro " was released as a digital download to cellphones in Japan , as well as ringtones of all of the tracks on the standard edition of the album . The song was the lead promotional track on the album , and received enough radio airplay to reach number 92 on the Billboard Japan Hot 100 chart .

To promote the album , the band made the album 's songs available for listening on their website between February 24 and 28 . The songs were only available from 4 : 00 @-@ 5 : 30am Japan Standard Time , during what they dubbed kikuuiki time . Each listener could randomly listen four or five songs . The whole album was made available for listening on March 1 . The band held a listening party at Liquid Loft in Shibuya , Tokyo on March 13 , which was simulcast on the video streaming website Ustream . The album was released in two editions ? limited and standard . The limited edition features a bonus track , " Paradise of Sunny " , which is a dub remix of the song " Yes No " , remixed by recording engineer Sachio " Sunny " Sasaki .

The band performed a thirteen @-@ date national tour of Japan in April and May , dubbed the Sakanaquarium 2010 Kikuuiki . The final two dates were held at the 2 @,@ 000 capacity Zepp Sapporo concert hall on May 8 , followed by the 2 @,@ 400 capacity Shinkiba Studio Coast in Koto , Tokyo . Footage of seven songs performed at Shinkiba Studio Coast on May 15 were made available as iTunes downloads in August 2010 . The band followed up this tour with their first concert at the Nippon Budokan stadium . The Shinkiba Studio Coast and Nippon Budokan concerts were released on DVD in 2011 . The album was re @-@ released on March 25 , 2015 , as a lossless digital download . This was followed by an LP record edition on August 5 , 2015 , to

coincide with the release of the band 's compilation album Natsukashii Tsuki wa Atarashii Tsuki : Coupling & Remix Works .

= = Reception = =

= = = Commercial reception = = =

On Oricon 's physical albums charts , the album debuted at number three with 29 @,@ 000 copies sold , behind One Piece Memorial Best , an album compiling theme songs from the anime One Piece , and pop / jazz singer Juju 's third album Juju . SoundScan Japan , another sales tracking agency , found that most copies were of the album 's limited edition , with 27 @,@ 000 copies sold in the first week . The album spent an additional three weeks in the top 50 , and left the top 300 after thirteen weeks . After the release of the band 's " Identity " single in August , the album charted for an additional six weeks . In 2011 , the album had two more chart runs in the top 300 : one in April after the release of their single " Rookie " , and one in August after the release of " Bach no Senritsu o Yoru ni Kiita Sei Desu . " . These four chart runs resulted in the album selling a total of 59 @,@ 000 copies in two years . Despite the album being the band 's most successful release up to that moment , Yamaguchi was disappointed with the album sales , as he expected it to sell over 100 @,@ 000 copies .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The album was well received by Japanese music critics , and was chosen as one of the eleven finalists for the 2011 CD Shop Awards . Toshitomo Doumei of Skream ! named the album his third favorite of 2011 , feeling that the album had simultaneously created new genres of alternative rock and pop music . He felt the album 's music was catchy , and that its success was expected due to its high quality . Entertainment Media Kulture called Kikuuiki the album that established Sakanaction 's current style . Yuji Tanaka of CDJournal felt the album was more cohesive than their previous works , praising the band 's skill progression and Yamaguchi 's lyrics , which he described as " literary @-@ style " and " cynical " . He was struck by the " heroic march " after the album 's introduction in the song " Ushio " , which made him feel " suddenly intoxicated ... like being in the ocean " . Takayuki Endoh of Skream ! similarly believed the album showed growth in the band . Although their previous releases incorporated dance and rock music , Endoh felt that the music on Kikuuiki had struck a better harmony between the two , and had simultaneously become more rock and dance ? oriented . He praised the album 's " poppy floating feeling , highly literary lyrics , and romantic electro sound " , feeling that the band was unique in the music industry .

Koji Dejima of Bounce felt that the album was ingenious in the way that it created a feeling of being out of place due to the its arrangements , melodies and lyrics . He praised the album 's varied sound , and the fact that the band always " spoke with their own words " despite this variety of sound . He noted " Aruku Around " ' s strong dance music sound , and likened " Klee " to the songs of The Police , and " Omotesand? Nij?roku @-@ ji " to the music of the 1970s American band Television . Rolling Stone Japan gave the album four stars out of five , praising the Yamaguchi 's " literary and original " lyrics , and how human the music sounded despite its electronic sound . Kaori Komatsu of Rockin ' On Japan felt that Yamaguchi 's lyrics created an " interesting feeling of unease " and had a " deep flavor " . She noted that Yamaguchi 's lyrics often described everyday life and his mental space , layered on top of each other in impressionist scenes . She felt that the band 's sound had become more ambitious in their genre crossovers , especially the inclusions of ambient music and dub elements , and that the songs had a " sense of city " , much stronger since they had moved to Tokyo . Tanaka of CDJournal noted similar qualities in the songs " Yes No " and " Ashita kara " , which to him expressed the loneliness of city life .

The album 's lead single " Aruku Around " was well received by music critics . CDJournal reviewers gave the single its star of recommendation , calling it a " killer tune " where the " pleasure of living in

the moment " and " prudence " is balanced . They noted the song 's retro sound , like nostalgic dance music , and felt that the band 's decision to move to Tokyo two years ago was reflected in the song . Kenji Sasaki of Skream ! felt that the song had a " gentle electronica feel " , praising the 1980s @-@ style synths , aggressive sound and " unique poetic sentiment " of Yamaguchi 's . He also praised the emotions the song gave him , mixing pain and exhilaration . Tomoki Takahashi of Rockin ' On Japan felt the greatest strength of the song was how its lyrical content jarred with its " high @-@ spirited words " and " explosive hybrid beat " . He noted that instead of talking about the pleasures of the dance floor , Yamaguchi 's lyrics were introspective , discussing loneliness , pain and longing . Takahashi praised the brave fanfare @-@ like synth based leading melody , and the " tight " and " earth @-@ shaking " four on the floor beat .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Ichiro Yamaguchi .

= = Personnel = =

Personnel details were sourced from Kikuuiki 's liner notes booklet .

Sakanaction

Personnel and imagery

= = Charts = =

= = = Sales = = =

= = Release history = =