Commercial Interior Design as Irony: A Case Study of Japan in the 1960s and 1970s

Keiko Hashimoto
Kindai University

Abstract

In Japan, commercial interior design, or the interior design of boutiques, retail stores, and restaurants, used be the subject of art criticism. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the major design magazines *Japan Interior Design, Shoten Kenchiku,* and *Design* frequently carried interior design reviews by up-and-coming art critics. Under such circumstances, 'ironic design' became one of the main concerns of avant-garde designers in the 1970s. It was the design concept mostly argued by critic, Koji Taki on Shiro Kuramata's interior design. One of Kuramata's shop interior used fluorescent tubes in place of columns for display shelves. According to Taki, it expressed an 'irony' against the 'system of things' in which the showrooms always had separate lighting fixtures and display shelves. 'Ironic design' was practiced especially in the early 1970s but it went out of style soon after. The purpose of this paper, therefore, was to examine the role played by the concept of 'irony' in commercial interior design from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s. It was assumed that what the 'irony' of the 1970s brought to interior design in Japan was an attitude that viewed interior design as rhetoric. The concept of 'irony' was popularized with avant-garde designers probably because 'irony' was a convenient concept for giving a meaning to the minimalist interior design. Then, as a reaction to this attitude, the commercial interior design in the postmodern era of the 1980s, was stripped of its 'meaning' such as 'irony' and turned into a search for the sensual. Unlike Italian and American postmodernism, there was no semiotic manipulation in the 'postmodern interior' in Japan in the 1980s. For Japanese designers, the 'postmodern interior' seems to have meant a departure from the semiotic manipulation represented by the 'ironical design' of the 1970s.

Keywords: Keyword 1; Commercial interior design 2; Irony 3; Japan 4; The 1970s

1. Introduction

In Japan, commercial interior design, or the interior design of boutiques, retail stores, and restaurants, has a history not found in other interior design categories. That is, commercial interior design used to be the subject of art criticism. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the major design magazines *Interior, Shoten Kenchiku,* and *Design* frequently carried interior design reviews by up-and-coming art critics such as Koji Taki, Yusuke Nakahara, Yoshiaki Tono, and Takahiko Okada. They commented on shop interiors and furniture in the same way as they commented on art. The interiors by Takashi Sakaizawa, Shiro Kuramata, Sinya Okayama, Shoei Yoh, and Super Potato were similar to the art of their time.

However, art critics' favorites were almost exclusively limited to Shiro Kuramata's designs. Taki developed a semiotic theory of Kuramata's furniture and interiors, and Yoshiaki Tono exhibited Kuramata's glass furniture in his contemporary art exhibition, 'Art Today '77 (1).'

The reason why Taki, Tono, and other critics were interested in Kuramata's design is probably because they saw the same conceptual manipulation as art in Kuramata's design, whereas other designers' examples seem to be more or less similar to art only at the visual level. This would be

obvious if we compare the two examples: the cafe Tomomatsu (Hachioji, Tokyo, 1970, Fig. 1), in which Takashi Sakaizawa covered all the furniture with white plastic cloth, and Edward's Head Office (Minami-Aoyama, Tokyo, 1969, Fig. 2), in which Kuramata used fluorescent tubes as pillars for display shelves. Both interiors seem to directly reflect the expression of contemporary art of the time. The source of Tomomatsu is Christo's packaging art, while that of Edward's Head Office is Dan Fravin's fluorescent tube installation.

(left) Figure 1: Café Tomomatsu, Tokyo, 1970, designed by Takashi Sakaizawa.
(right) Figure 2: Edward's Head Office, Tokyo, 1969, designed by Shiro Kuramata

In Taki's interpretation, however, the design of the Edward's Head Office had a meaning other than a reference to Fravin's art. In this interior, fluorescent tubes are used in place of columns for display shelves. According to Taki, it expressed an 'irony' against the 'system of things' in which the showrooms always had separate lighting fixtures and display shelves. In this regard, unlike Kuramata's Edward's Head Office, Sakaizawa's Tomomatsu cannot be seen as an irony to the conventional system of things.

Even though Kuramata's design was probably the only one evaluated as 'ironic design' by renowned critics, 'ironic design' became one of the main concerns of avant-garde designers in the 1970s. In the January 1971 issue of the magazine *SD*, Taki's critique of Kuramata, 'Irony for Rational Systems,' was published. Later, at a roundtable discussion among designers in 1975, interior designer Shoei Yoh looked back on the design movement up to that time and said, 'Criticism and irony used to exist as design, but criticism and irony will produce nothing from now on (2).'

From Yoh's statement, it seems certain that 'irony' existed as design. If so, how did it exist and what impact did it have on the world of commercial interior design? The purpose of this study is to find this out by examining the role played by the concept of 'irony' in commercial interior design from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s.

Chapter 2 discusses what Taki meant by 'irony.' As appeared in the Oxford English dictionary, the meaning of irony has acquired new meanings with the emergence of various art forms. In light of the OED's definition, the author will explore Taki's definition of 'irony.' Chapter 3 examines how the concept of 'irony' argued by Taki was received by designers in the 1960s and 1970s through examples of interior works by Shinya Okayama and Shoei Yo. As the author mentioned above, design as 'irony' was on the decline by around 1975, as Yo said, '… irony will produce nothing from now on.' Chapter 4, therefore, explores the reasons for the decline to clarify what irony brought to design in the 1960s and 1970s.

2. Definition of 'Irony'
2.1. General Definition

The first definition of 'irony' in rhetoric published in the Oxford English Dictionary (hereafter OED) is 'The expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect; esp. (in earlier use) the use of approbatory language to imply condemnation or contempt (cf. sarcasm n.) (3).' This is the meaning of 'irony' as rhetoric, but the concept of 'irony' has historically developed in its own way in philosophy, aesthetics, and literature.

The second definition of 'irony' in the OED is derived from one of the etymologies of the word, eironeia, which means 'disguise (pretense, dissimulation)' in classical Greek: 'Dissimulation, pretense; esp. (and in later use only) feigned ignorance and disingenuousness of the kind employed by Socrates during philosophical discussions (see Socratic irony n.); an instance of this. Cf. eiron (4).' From this definition derives 'Romantic Irony,' which originated with the German Romantic writer and critic Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), meaning 'An attitude of detached skepticism adopted by an author towards his or her work, typically manifesting in literary self-consciousness and self-reflection (5).'

The OED's third definition of 'irony' is 'A state of affairs or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what was or might be expected; an outcome cruelly, humorously, or strangely at odds with assumptions or expectations (6).' Dramatic irony, for example, is a concept that developed from this definition.

2.2 Taki's Definition

As we have seen in the previous section, the meaning of the word 'irony' varies widely and depends entirely on the field and context. Which definition of the word 'irony' did Taki use in his Kuramata criticism? Let's look at some of Taki's statements. The first we see is Taki's interpretation of Spring's Chair (1968), in which the chair legs are made of a large spring (Fig. 3).

> A spring chair is not without consideration of the strength, elasticity, and height of the springs, but the overall phase of the thing (...) does not arise from a consideration of their performance. The idea of a single giant spring supporting the seat is not so much an idea of structural ingenuity or eccentricity as it is irony in response to the conventional construction of the chair. This irony (an aesthetic that can be described as humor or nonsense) is not thereby detached from its function, but much closer and more directly to the hidden center of the environment of human behavior. In this light, it may be more accurate to say that the irony is not so much about the furniture as it is about everyday life itself (7).

Figure 3: Spring Chair, 1968, designed by Shiro Kuramata

The meaning of 'irony' here seems to fit at least the OED's first definition of 'using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect.' In fact, in the quote, Taki

paraphrases the word 'irony' as 'an aesthetic that can be described as humor or nonsense.'

Indeed, sitting on this chair is a kind of humorous experience. When you sit on the chair, the chair sways in accordance with your movements when you talk or eat with the person across from you. A conventional chair normally supports a person's body without moving. So, the Spring Chair can be seen as the antithesis of a conventional chair.

Nevertheless, Taki once explained what he meant by 'irony' in 1974 as follows:

...Kuramata's chairs, drawers, and lights are attractive because they are a kind of irony. In this case, irony means that each tool has within itself questions about sitting and light, but in other words, it includes fiction (8).

Here, Taki explained that 'irony' is that 'each tool has within itself questions about sitting and light.' 'Irony' in this sense is consistent with the second definition of the OED. In other words, it is an irony that Socrates, under the guise of ignorance, forces his interlocutor into reflection and leads him to true knowledge by asking him questions and contradicting him (Socrates' birthing technique). Thus, the irony that Taki explained here can be seen as an attitude of fundamentally questioning the legitimacy of existing interior design and product design.

Taki, therefore, used 'irony' in both the first and second definitions in the OED. Taki also described Kuramata's design as a 'paradox,' but in fact 'irony' in the antithetical sense is often used almost synonymously with 'paradox,' and such usage was emphasized by the New Critic in the 1950s, which must have been known to Taki.

The meaning of 'irony' in the domain of commercial interior design Japan in the early 1970s can be thought of as an antithetical (contrariwise) or paradoxical design that fundamentally questions the legitimacy of the existing systems of design as argued by Taki.

3. 'Irony' in Commercial Interior Design in the 1970s
3.1. 'Irony' in Okayama's Design

How did the irony in Taki's sense inspire the designers in the 1970s? First, let us look at the relationship between the concept of 'irony' and the design of Sinya Okayama's bar Modern Jazz & Soul Studio 14 (Kitashinchi, Osaka, 1978, Fig. 4).

Figure 4: Modern Jazz & Soul Studio 14, Osaka, 1978, designed by Sinya Okayama

Studio 14 has a number of identical sofas, some of which are actually light fixtures not sofas. When the author asked Okayama in 2022 why the sofa and lighting were designed the same, he replied, 'A little irony (9).' Exactly one year later, the author asked Okayama again why he had said,

'A little irony,' he unexpectedly replied, 'I don't recall ever saying 'irony.' He then said, 'If I said so, it probably means that this light fixture has the original form of a sofa, but does not have the function of a sofa, but has a completely different function (10).' Then, he recalled that the idea of designing the lighting and sofa in the same shape was inspired by animal mimicry: 'For example, a chameleon changes color in response to its surroundings, and lighting becomes a sofa (11).'

What the inspiration of animal mimicry suggests is that 'irony' may not be an appropriate word to describe what Okayama had in mind as a design concept for Studio 14. Perhaps, Studio 14 should be described as interior design as 'humor' or a 'trick.' 'Trick art' and 'trompe l'oeil' were popular in the 1970s, and creators like Okayama who loved surrealist art and contemporary avant-garde art at the time paid attention to them. The reason that Okayama unintentionally uttered the word 'irony' in the 2022 interview may be because the word 'irony' was completely imprinted on Okayama in the 1970s. Moreover, using a word 'irony' for describing Studio 14 is not completely wrong. As we have seen in the general definition of a word 'irony' in Chapter 2, 'irony' includes the meaning of humor. But in any case, it is more natural to assume he had 'trick art' or 'humor' in his mind when he designed Studio 14, rather than something 'ironic'.

Okayama also told the author about his thoughts on the 'design concept':

> Each designer has his or her favorite image, and the meaning is usually an 'afterthought.' Therefore, when I wrote the design concept for a design magazine, it must have been written after the design was completed and after rethinking how such a design came about (12).

If 'meaning is usually an afterthought,' meaning that designers always create design concepts after the design is complete, then 'irony' popularized by Taki may have been the most convenient concept to give meaning to minimalist and non-decorative interior designs. In the case of Studio 14, Okayama's first idea was to reduce the number of shapes to create a minimalistic and fictional interior. As a result, he designed the lighting and sofa in the same shape. Then came 'irony' and 'paradox' as the best way to present the 'design concept.'

3.2. 'Irony' in Yoh's Design
If for Okayama, the concept of 'irony' was a convenient concept for minimalist interior design, what about the case of the design by Shoei Yoh who mentioned on 'irony' in 1975? In 'Shoemaker Cornaria' (Nishitetsu Grand Hotel, Fukuoka, 1971, Fig. 5), one of Yoh's highly acclaimed works, the wall where shoes are displayed is a luminous wall using acrylic panels and 40-watt fluorescent tubes, and the sofa is also a luminous sofa with fluorescent tubes embedded in molded acrylic. Yoh notes the following:

> The significance of these attempts lies not only in lighting that does not require so-called lighting fixtures, but also in the search for an aesthetic exploration of surface light sources such as *shoji* screens and *andon* lanterns using Japanese paper, the most excellent lighting control devices from ancient Japan. What is most significant, however, may be the fact that the furniture itself or the interior itself becomes a luminescent object, providing the necessary brightness to the necessary areas. A kind of visual experimentation that replaces the mass of substance with light is still to come (13).
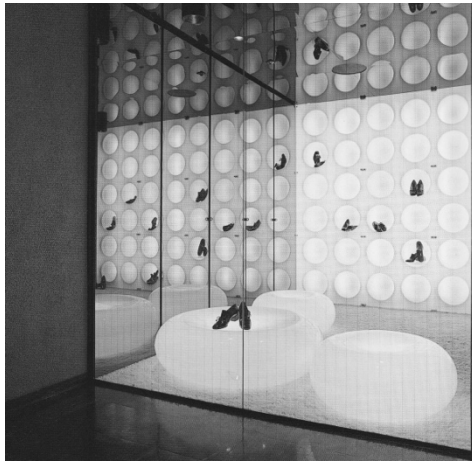
Figure 5. Shoemaker Cornaria, Fukuoka, 1971, designed by Shoei Yoh.

First, 'lighting that does not require so-called lighting fixtures' can be considered an extension of Taki's theory. The idea that 'the furniture itself or the interior itself becomes a luminescent object' reminds us of Kuramata's Edward's Head Office with which Taki developed his theory of 'ironical design.'

However, Yoh also wrote that these walls and tables also take on lighting as 'an aesthetic exploration of surface light sources such as *shoji* screens and *andon* lanterns.' Moreover, he wrote of Cornaria: 'A kind of visual experimentation that replaces the mass of substance with light is still to come.' These statements by Yoh suggest that he reevaluated traditional Japanese interior design from an 'ironical design' perspective. *Shoji* or *andon* demonstrates a way of replacing the visible mass of matter with invisible light. This can be seen as 'ironic' design in the sense of irony toward the way we see things. In the case of Yoh, therefore, we do not know if the concept of 'irony' was an 'afterthought.' His words rather indicate that the concept of 'irony' preceded the act of designing.

3.3 What 'Irony' Has Brought to Interior Design

The analysis of the manifestations of irony in the designs of Okayama and Yoh suggests the following. First, even if designers described their designs as 'ironic,' it is likely that this explanation was an afterthought. On the other hand, there may have been cases in which designers conceived of images (or forms, colors, materials) as 'irony' for specific things from the beginning.

Thus, how the concept of 'irony' was involved in act of designing may have been polarizing. However, whether an 'afterthought' or not, the interior designs in which the irony concept was discussed were generally minimalist design interiors. This means that 'irony' was a convenient word term that gave meaning to the minimalist commercial interior in the 1960s and 1970s. Minimal design interiors often combine multiple functions into one form, and this could be explained as irony to the general relationship between function and form.

If the concept of 'irony' was 'afterthought,' why did designers try to give their designs ironic 'meanings' that did not initially occur to them? By the 1970s, it was customary for designers to send photographs of their designs with a text describing the 'meaning' of their designs to magazines and the 'meaning' of their designs spread. What this phenomenon brought about was an interpretation of interior design as 'language,' or rhetoric, rather than as 'objects' or 'space.' Perhaps due in part to Taki's critique of Kuramata's design and its compatibility with minimalist design, 'irony' became a leading rhetoric in the interior design world (14).

4. Skepticism about 'Irony'
4.1. Denial of 'Irony'

It was at a round-table discussion in 1975 that Yoh made a statement against 'irony' in design, but it was not until several years later that the denial of 'irony' or 'design as rhetoric' came to the surface. First, Kuramata said in 1979, 'I was surprised when people viewed my work as having an ironic message, and I was inspired by that. Recently, however, I have abandoned that idea (15).' Two years later, in 1981, he wrote a short essay for Toyota Motor Corporation, commenting that he attempted an ironic or paradoxical design to escape the spell of modern design, but in any case, it was also modern design (16).

Kuramata came to think that his own expression of irony was just another modern design. In other words, he concluded that as long as the target of irony is modern design, design as irony cannot go beyond modern design. During the period between 1979 and 1980, when Kuramata wrote these notes, he was invited to Memphis, led by Ettore Sottsass, Jr. The playful design practiced by Memphis may have influenced Kuramata to begin speaking out against 'irony.'

Takashi Sakaizawa, who designed Tomomatsu, was also in contact with Alessandro Mendini's Alchimia at the time, and in 1980 he formed the group Poe Form with Sinya Okayama and others, aiming for the same freedom of expression as Alchimia. The purpose of the group's formation was to bring back into the hands of designers the images that had been driven out by logic. In an article about the formation of 'Poe Form,' Sakaisawa wrote the following:

> ...It seems that in Japan today, interiors created by designers are evaluated according to the one-dimensional view that logic determines the value of the interior. The logic is very one-sided, and the best theories are those that embody conceptual art, and the influence of the former minimalist art is particularly strong and is the main culprit in making interior design in Japan unsociable, pretentious, and without smiles (17).

Although there is no reference to 'rhetoric' in Sakaizawa's text, what Poe Form attacks is the act of seeing design as logic, and this act is synonymous with seeing design as rhetoric. As a matter of fact, Sakaizawa was a designer who developed logical design under the influence of art, as shown by Tomomatsu. The same is true of Kuramata. Therefore, it was rather the designers who were practicing ironic or logical design by the end of the 1970s who rejected ironic or logical design.

4.2. Design after the Denial of 'Irony'

How did the move to reject ironcal designs affect the designers? In fact, Yoh's design did not change significantly; his Boutique Two (Minato-ku, Tokyo, 1984) is basically minimalist, as were his works in the 1970s, although the presence of diagonal pillar-like objects shows the influence of the deconstructionism of the time.

Kuramata's design did not change significantly either. For the most part, the designs were minimalistic and non-decorative, as was the design for 'irony,' and some of the furniture he designed for the Memphis exhibitions was also symbolic. However, the furniture and its interiors made of terrazzo encrusted with colorful glass shards were not consciously designed as rhetoric, but concentrated on the beauty of form, material or color (Fig. 6). He wrote about his design after rejecting 'irony' in 1981 as follows:

> The spell [of modern design] has been broken a bit over the past few years and the concept of design is about to change drastically in my mind. ...... human beings may be able to detect directions and to express and react by sensibility instead of instinct. It may be the superior sensibility of human beings that saves the radical functional beauty that is backed by rationality. For sensitivity is the total of love (18).

Figure 6: Boutique Issey Miyake Ginza Matsuya, 1983, Tokyo, designed by Shiro Kuramata

Sensibility is an element of design that is impossible to verbalize. Kuramata's statement strongly suggests that he was trying to escape from verbalizing design in order to explore his non-verbalized sensibilities.

Sakaizawa celebrated freedom of color and image, as shown in his Poe Form entries (Fig. 7). The chairs he exhibited at the first Poe Form exhibition in 1980 are postmodern in design. They look like the combination of motifs from various historical styles, but perhaps he had no such idea. Memphis and Alkimia were to attack elitism in design by daring to use ironic motifs and techniques of historical styles, but this did not apply to the Japanese, who have a different historical style. Okayama told the authors, 'Simply, I liked what I saw in Memphis and Alkimia design. When we did what we later called postmodern design, we had nothing to deny like the Italian designers. This was true of Japanese postmodern design as well (19).'
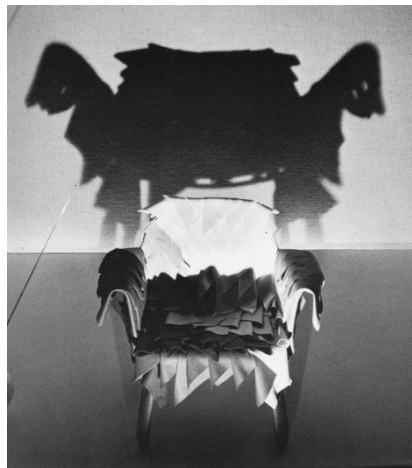

Figure 7: Chair *Last Victim*, 1980, designed by Takashi Sakaizawa.

In fact, around 1981, Okayama's designs have shifted to the use of bright colors and decorative forms, which are considered so-called postmodern as shown in Pub Birgo (Osaka, 1981). Like Sakaizawa, however, these motifs were not chosen for their 'meaning'. The restaurant Rocky (Higashi Osaka, Osaka, 1981, Fig. 8), with its tiled, Greek temple-like façade with colonnades that looks as if it were dug out of the rock, seems to refer to historical styles, but it is not. Okayama designed the form purely according to his own sensibilities.

As discussed above, the designs after the rejection of 'irony' were inspired by Italian radical

design and used colorful colors, historical styles, and decorative forms that were later considered characteristic of postmodern design. However, there was no semiotic manipulation like Italian and American postmodernism, and Japanese postmodernism was purely inspired by the shapes and colors of postmodernism outside Japan, as many people later recalled. One of the reasons for this is that Japan does not have the same architectural and design traditions as Europe. Another reason might be that Japan had already done 'ironic design' in the 1970s and was tired of semiotic manipulation when it came to postmodern design. Postmodern design, which in Europe and America was supposed to be semiotic, has been transformed into a formative exploration, at least in the Japanese interior design world.
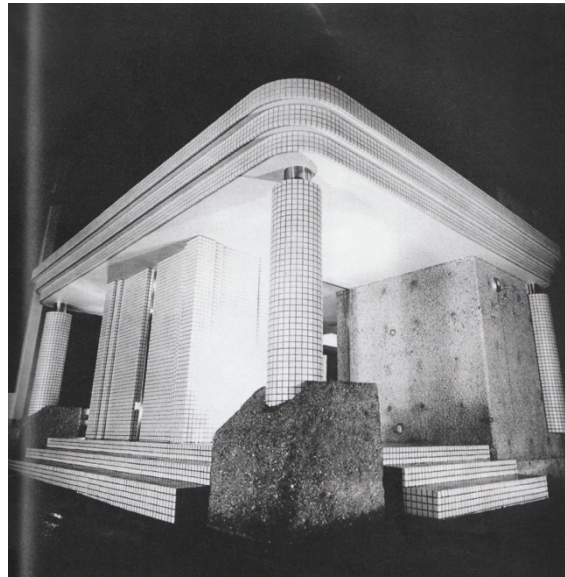

Figure 8: Restaurant Hot Stone Dishes Rocky, Osaka, 1981, designed by Sinya Okayama

5. Conclusion: What Has 'Irony' Design Brought to Interior Design in Japan?

This study attempts to examine the role played by the concept of 'irony' in commercial interior design in the 1970s. What the 'irony' of the 1970s brought to interior design in Japan was, above all, an attitude that viewed interior design as rhetoric. The concept of 'irony' was popularized with avant-garde designers probably because 'irony' was a convenient concept for giving a meaning to the minimalist interior design. Then, as a reaction to this attitude, the commercial interior design in the postmodern era of the 1980s, was stripped of its 'meaning' such as 'irony' and turned into a search for the sensual. Unlike Italian and American postmodernism, there was no semiotic manipulation in the so called 'postmodern interior' in Japan in the 1980s. For Japanese designers, the 'postmodern interior' seems to have meant a departure from the semiotic manipulation represented by the 'ironical design' of the 1970s.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Japanese interior design world, which once experienced 'irony' in design in the 1970s, has completely lost its expression of 'irony toward the system of things.' According to Oki and Watanabe, the exhibitions in the 1980s at Tokyo Designers Space, a gallery established by designers in Aoyama, Tokyo in 1976, continued to question what the idea of interior design was through the presentation of designs as 'objects (20).' Such questions naturally led to giving logic to the sensibility of postmodern design. While it is difficult to verbalize sensibility and beauty, the fact that such efforts were made in the world of commercial interior design is a phenomenon unique to Japan, and is certainly a result of the practice of 'ironic design' in the 1970s.

Notes

1. *Art Today 77: The Structure of Seeing* was held at the Seibu Art Museum in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, from July 7 to 27, 1977. Curated by Yoshiaki Tono, the exhibition featured six artists: Shiro Kuramata, Keiji Usami, Tatsuo Kawaguchi, Satoshi Saito, and Kunikazu Shima. All but Kuramata are fine artists.

2. Shoei Yoh, Shigeru Uchida et al., "Jugo nenkan no zokei design no sokuseki ha wareware ni nani wo motarashitaka [What has 15 years of plastic art and design brought us?], *Japan Interior Design Fifteenth Anniversary Issue* (Tokyo: Interior Shuppan, 1975): 146. The quotation was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

3. "irony," Oxford English Dictionary, accessed August 27, 2023, https://www-oed-com.rmx.clib.kindai.ac.jp/dictionary/irony_n?tab=meaning_and_use#64966

4. "irony," Oxford English Dictionary.

5. "irony," Oxford English Dictionary.

6. "irony," Oxford English Dictionary.

7. Koji Taki, "Goritekiseido heno irony[Irony for rational systems]," *SD* 75(January 1971): 27. The quotation was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

8. Koji Taki, Shiro Kuramata, "Jibutsu no gyakusetsu[Paradox of things,]" Koji Taki, *Taki Koji taidanshu: yonin no designer tono taiwa* [collection of dialogues by Koji Taki: conversation with four designers], (Tokyo: Shinkenchiku-sha, 1975), 192. The quotation was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

9. Sinya Okayama in discussion with Keiko Hashimoto at Café Belle, Sheraton Miyako Hotel Osaka, Uehonmachi, Osaka, August 24, 2022. The comment was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

10. Sinya Okayama in discussion with Keiko Hashimoto at Café Belle, Sheraton Miyako Hotel Osaka, Uehonmachi, Osaka, August 23, 2023. The comment was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

11. Okayama in discussion with Hashimoto on August 23, 2023.

12. Okayama in discussion with Hashimoto on August 23, 2023.

13. Shoei Yoh, "Shoemaker <Cornaria,>" *Japan Interior Design* 149(August 1971): 52. The quotation was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

14. In the field of architecture, the interpretation of architecture as rhetoric, such as irony and quotation, had already begun to spread through the introduction of Hans Hollein, Archigram, Charles Moore, Robert Venturi, and other architects and their ideas, which Arata Isozaki serialized in the magazine Bijutsu Techo from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. Taki's interpretation of Kuramata's designs as irony designs was probably greatly

influenced by Isozaki's writings. The serial by in Bijutsu Techo were reprinted in Arata Isozaki, *Kenchiku no kaitai: 1968 nen no kenchiku jokyo* [Architectural demolition: the situation of architecture in 1968], Tokyo: Kajima Shuppankai, 1997.

15. Shiro Kuramata and Seitaro Kuroda, "Kuroda seitaro no irasuto rupo [Seitaro Kuroda's illustrated report,]" *Design Age* 1(1979): 11-12. The quotation was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

16. See Shiro Kuramata, "Tannaru kinobi wo koeta saki koso, nihonjin no kansei no sekai [Beyond mere functional beauty is the world of Japanese sensibility,]" the brochure of Toyota's cars Soarer and Crown published in 1981. The quotation was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

17. Takashi Sakaizawa, "Image karano tegakari: group Poe Form no kangaekata [Clues from the image: the group Poe Form concept]," *Japan Interior Design* 256(July 1980): 20. The quotation was translated from Japanese into English by Keiko Hashimoto.

18. Kuramata, "Tannaru kinobi wo koeta saki koso, nihonjin no kansei no sekai."

19. Okayama in discussion with Hashimoto on August 23, 2023.

20. Kenji Oki and Hisako Watanabe in discussion with Keiko Hashimoto at the Restaurant & Lounge "eu," Sheraton Miyako Hotel Osaka, Uehonmachi, Osaka, August 26, 2023.

Photo Credits
1, 5, 6: Yoshiio Shiratori, 2: Mitsumasa Fujitsuka, 4: Fukumoto Masaaki,
8: Mitsutaka Hashimoto

Author Biography

Keiko Hashimoto
Keiko Hashimoto received BA (English Literature) from Keio University, Tokyo, MA (Art History) from University of East Anglia, UK, and PhD (Design History) from Kobe University, Japan. After working as a Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, and the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, she became an Assistant Professor at Kobe Gakuin University, Kobe (2011-2106) and Associate Professor at Kindai University, Osaka (2016 to date). Her field of research is History of the 20th Century Art and Design, and she is currently working on commercial interior and furniture design by Shiro Kuramata and other avant-garde interior designers in the late 20th century Japan. She recently wrote; 'Book 2: Catalogue of Works' in Deyan Sudjic, Shiro Kuramata (London: Phaidon Press, 2013); 'Kuramata, Shiro (1934-91)' (book chapter) in The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Design, ed. Clive Edwards (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Kuramata entries of Atlas of Furniture Design (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 2019).